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THE AUTHENTICITY, UNCORRUPTED PRESERVATION, AND CREDIBILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY

GODFREY LESS,
LATE PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GOTTINGEN, &c.

TRANSLATED FROM

THE LAST EDITION OF THE GERMAN.

BY

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE ſubject of the work now offered to the public in an Engliſh tranſlation is an examination of the following queſtions: Whether the books of the New Teſtament were really written by the perſons to whom they are aſcribed; Whether they have deſcended to us perfectly uncorrupted in all eſſential matters, as they left the hands of their authors; And, laſtly, Whether they contain a narration of events which did actually take place.

That this inquiry is of the greateſt conſequence, and demands our moſt impartial attention, will be evident from theſe conſiderations:—That if we cannot anſwer the above queſtions in the affirmative, then is the Chriſtian Religion a cunningly deviſed fable:—but, on the contrary, if in reſult of the examination, it ſhould be found that the New Teſtament is both genuine and authentic,—then it

will require but few arguments to ſhew that the miracles contained in it, are true, that the writers were inſpired perſons, and that our holy faith is a revelation of the will of God.

On this ſubject the learned author of the following work, Dr. Leſs, had himſelf entertained doubts during many years of his life: for his own private ſatisfaction he inſtituted a ſevere and rigid inquiry: the reſult is exhibited to the Public in the preſent treatiſe; and to himſelf the conſequence was a ſolid, rational, and ſatisfactory conviction. The Original was put into my hands, during my reſidence in Germany, by a perſon of diſtinguiſhed worth: on peruſal it appeared to me extremely well calculated, from its conciſeneſs, perſpicuity, and ſeverity of examination to produce the ſame effect on others, and to be of ſervice to the Chriſtian cauſe; as I cannot conceive it poſſible for any man, who honeſtly and impartially ſeeks after truth, to read it with the attention which the ſubject demands, without receiving the ſame conviction which the author himſelf obtained.—This opinion of the original work firſt led me to form the deſign of tranſlating it into my native language.

Few

Few are the writers who have expreſsly treated on the Authenticity of the books of the New Teſtament, and fewer ſtill who have done it in a manner always ſatisfactory to the reader. Du Pin is miſerably defective: and Jones ſeems to have been anxious rather to ſhew that certain writings are Apocryphal, than to prove that the books of the New Teſtament are Canonical. Indeed he has paſſed over all the Epiſtles and the Apocalypſe without paying the leaſt regard to them.

But ſince his time Dr. Lardner has employed immenſe labour and profound erudition on the ſame ſubject: nor do I know any man to whom the Chriſtian world has more obligations than to the author of the Credibility of the Goſpel-Hiſtory. He appears to have almoſt exhauſted his ſubject, and to have rendered any ſubſequent undertaking of a ſimilar nature perfectly unneceſſary. Inſtead of giving my own opinion on the difference between the preſent treatiſe and the voluminous work of Lardner, I will lay before the reader the ſentiments of the great Michaelis and of the Rev. Herbert Marſh, one of the moſt accurate Theological ſcholars that any age or country has ever produced. "The beſt treatiſes" ſays Michaelis

" upon this ſubject (the authenticity of the New Teſtament) are Lardner's Credibility of the Goſpel-Hiſtory, and Leſs's Truth of the Chriſtian Religion (the ſubject of the following ſheets). The former of theſe works, which has been cenſured for its prolixity, contains a very large collection of teſtimonies from the Fathers and other ancient writers, and is highly valuable to thoſe who would examine the whole ſeries of evidence for the authenticity of the New Teſtament. The works of Lardner have been leſs read, than they deſerve: every one intereſted in this inquiry ſhould poſſeſs them, were it only for occaſional reference, and they are indiſpenſible to a clergyman, who cannot remain indifferent on ſo important a ſubject, and whoſe duty is not only to believe but to convinced. The latter of theſe works is more agreeable to read becauſe prolixity is avoided, and it is eaſy to overſee the whole chain of reaſoning at a ſingle view. Various teſtimonies which Lardner had quoted, are omitted by Leſs, becauſe they were not ſufficiently convincing, and he has ſupplied what Lardner had omitted. Every reader will remark, in peruſing this treatiſe, what I have learnt in frequent converſation with the author,

that it is the result of a conscientious, even anxiously conscientious inquiry, which he had instituted for his own private conviction. Doubts on which Lardner never thought, he has felt and proved."—Thus far Michaelis: and his learned translator has borne his testimony to the value of the present work in a note to the passage just quoted: "It would be impossible" says he "to give an abridgement of it in these notes, as the author himself is very concise: but the whole deserves to be translated in a separate work."—To the testimony of such authorities I will add nothing: that which has obtained the praise of Michaelis, and the recommendation of Marsh, needs no further panegyric.

I have only to say a few words in respect to the translation.—It is made from the last edition of the Original printed at Gottingen 1786, and is always, it is hoped, faithful to the sense of the author, and generally as literal as the peculiar idioms of the different languages will allow. The whole work of Dr. Less, which is called by the general name of Geschichte der Religion, or History of Religion, is comprised in three volumes. The first is employed on the history of both natural and revealed Re-

ligion. In the ſecond the divine origin of Chriſtianity is proved at large. And the third is occupied with the examination and refutation of objections to the Chriſtian Religion.

As the following treatiſe is taken from the body of a work of ſuch magnitude, which is only divided according to the grand diviſions of the ſubject, I conceived it neceſſary to alter its form by breaking it into the ſubdiviſions of books, chapters &c.; in order that the connection of one part with another might be more readily perceived, and the whole more eaſily comprehended. From the ſame cauſe I have ſometimes omitted a word, a ſentence, or even a whole paragraph, which appeared unneceſſary in the preſent inquiry, and had an evident reference to parts of the work unconnected with the ſubject of theſe ſheets.

In the quotations from the Holy Scriptures, Leſs has frequently paraphraſed the paſſage, from a deſire to convey the ſenſe without retaining the obſolete phraſeology of the authoriſed tranſlation of his country. It was my wiſh to have always adhered literally to our Engliſh verſion; but, as a tranſlator, I have been obliged, in order to retain my author's argument, to retain the form in which it is con-

conveyed, and have therefore been ſometimes compelled to render his paraphraſe word for word, when I could not introduce the common verſion.

I have ventured in one or two caſes to change the examples adduced by the author for others more familiar to an Engliſh reader; theſe are ſo unimportant that I do not think it neceſſary to indicate the particular inſtances.

However unimportant in point of magnitude may be the preſent work, yet it contains a large body of information. The ſubject matter, which if dilated in the modern faſhion, would fill a folio, is here condenſed into one ſmall volume. This conciſeneſs has tended to render the ſtyle of the Original extremely inelegant; and may perhaps have had a ſimilar effect on the Tranſlation. To which muſt be added, that conceiving perſpicuity in a work of this kind to be a paramount quality, I have ſtudied to make my book rather lucid than elegant, and have been more anxious that the reader ſhould be convinced by the ſolidity of the argument, than delighted by the beauty of the expreſſion.

Some time ſince I had formed an intention of publiſhing in the Engliſh language Dr. Leſs's larger

larger work On the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, and had made no ſmall progreſs in the tranſlation: that intention I have relinquiſhed for the preſent; whether at any future period I may renew the deſign will depend on cauſes which are not under my direction.

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PART I.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BOOK I.

Of the Internal Evidence.

CHAP. I.

The Neceſſity of this Inquiry.

THE faith of Chriſtians is thus diſtinguiſhed from all the other religions of the world: it pronounces Jeſus to be the Redeemer of men, promiſed by God, the only cauſe of their ſalvation, and aſſerts his doctrine to be undeniably true. Should there, then, never have exiſted in the world a perſon, who, in the time of the Roman Emperour Auguſtus, was born at Bethlehem of Mary, a Jewiſh virgin, and known

to his countrymen by the name of Jeſus; ſhould this Jeſus never have performed any *miracles*, in order to prove the truth of his doctrines; ſhould he not have ariſen from the dead; ſhould he, laſtly, have never uttered any true *prophecies*; then the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith are, without doubt, a forgery. But ſhould theſe facts be incontrovertibly true, then it is equally incontrovertible, that the religion of Chriſtians is alſo true. The Chriſtian religion, therefore, is *founded on facts*, and conſequently muſt be proved in the ſame manner as we prove the truth of other hiſtorical ſubjects.

The evidences which Chriſtians adduce for the truth of theſe facts, are contained in the Books of the New Teſtament. The authors of theſe books are the witneſſes, on whoſe credit Chriſtians believe that hiſtory. If, therefore, the credibility of theſe authors, and of their writings, can be as ſtrictly

proved

proved as the credibility of a Tacitus, Livy, Thuanus, or Burnet, then we muſt either give up the greateſt, moſt beautiful, and moſt uſeful part of human knowledge, the whole of hiſtory, together with all its various branches, or we muſt confeſs—that the Books of the New Teſtament, in all *natural* and *not miraculous ſubjects*, are worthy of credit.

I acknowledge, that ſhould the credibility of the writers of the New Teſtament be brought even to the very higheſt degree of hiſtorical certainty, that the *hiſtorical truth* of the *miracles* they relate would not be thereby proved. An author may be in the higheſt degree worthy of credit, and yet may ſometimes be overcome by the weakneſs incident to human nature, and relate abſurdities or forged miracles as undoubted truths. We believe him in general; but if he relate *palpable abſurdities, ſound Reaſon* be-

comes an evidence againſt him, and her deciſion is infinitely more to be depended upon, than the credibility of any author whatever. We believe him in general; but if he relate *miracles*, then his credit *alone* is not ſufficient juſtly to challenge our aſſent. The more *uncommon* an event is, ſo much more weighty muſt be the proofs for it. If it be a real *miracle*, then it demands a perfectly peculiar kind of proof, of which I ſhall ſpeak in the Second Volume of this Work, when I treat of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion. According to theſe principles we decide on all hiſtorical writings. We acknowledge Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Tacitus, and Livy, to be perfectly credible authorities. Nevertheleſs, when they ſpeak of a certain divine vapour, which aroſe from the earth, and infilled into men a perfect knowledge of all futurity; or of a ring around the noſe, out of which the devil was driven;

or

or when they inform us, that the ſtatue of Jupiter ſpoke and perſpired; that it rained blood; that the Emperour Veſpaſian, by a mere touch, gave ſight to a blind man; in ſuch caſes we claim the privilege of refuſing our belief, or at leaſt of entirely paſſing them over as doubtful.

There are no other rules enabling us to judge of the writings of the New Teſtament, than thoſe by which we judge of any other hiſtorical work. Now we are accuſtomed to eſtabliſh the credibility of a book in the following manner:—We firſt prove the authenticity of the book itſelf, and then the credibility of its author. Two things belong to the proof of the authenticity; firſt, that the book was really written by the pretended author; and ſecondly, that it is come down to us perfectly uncorrupted as it left the hands of its author. In this maaner we decide on all hiſtorical writings; and men are

unanimouſly agreed, that it is as unreaſonable to receive an evidence which cannot be proved in this way, as to reject that which has endured theſe proofs. A man of accuracy and integrity will never attempt to prove the truth of an event, which is pretended to have happened in the firſt century, from what are called the writings of Dionyſius the Areopagite; for the name of Dionyſius, which they bear, is forged, and they were not compoſed until the fifth or ſixth century. Nor will he, like Whiſton, believe any thing on the authority of the larger epiſtles of Ignatius. Ignatius did indeed write epiſtles; but whatever exiſts in the larger, that is not found in the ſmaller, (and even theſe appear to be not abſolutely free from all interpolation) is the addition of a more modern hand. Oroſius is no credible evidence for the truth of events, which are pretended to have taken place at the birth of Jeſus;

nor

nor will a critic aſſert any thing on the credit of Simeon Metaphraſtes. The former did not write until the fifth century; and the latter is extremely credulous and much to be ſuſpected: neither of them therefore deſerves to be eſteemed a credible evidence.

Can, then, the three following propoſitions be proved:—Firſt, *that the New Teſtament was really written by the pretended contemporaries of Jeſus;*—Secondly, *that it is come down to us uncorrupted;*—and, Thirdly, *that the authors of it are evidences of credibility;*—ſtill we cannot, on their credit alone, prove the truth of the *miracles* they relate;—but thus much will be evident, that Jeſus did really preach the doctrine acknowledged by Chriſtians; that he was really born at Bethlehem, taught publicly in Judea, in the reign of Tiberius:—in a word, all the events which are *natural*, and *not miraculous*, muſt be conſidered as inconteſtibly

true, on the authority of theſe evidences alone.

CHAP. II.

Of the internal Traces of Authenticity in the New Teſtament.

WHEN Lord Bolingbroke, [a] in his Letters on Hiſtory, is pointing out the neceſſity of this ſtudy to a Theologian, he reproaches the defenders of Chriſtianity, that they are accuſtomed to tranſcribe from each other, and thereby perpetuate the errors which have been inadvertently admitted, or the fallacies which have been purpoſely contrived, —"Abbadie," theſe are his own words, "ſays, in his famous book, that the Goſpel of St. Matthew is cited by Clemens, Biſhop of Rome, a diſciple of the apoſtles; that Barnabas cites it

[a] Letter V.—vol. ii. p. 349—351. of the 4to edit.

in his epiſtle; that Ignatius and Polycarpe receive it; and that the ſame fathers, that give teſtimony for Matthew, give it likewiſe for Mark.—If the fathers of the firſt century do mention ſome paſſages, that are agreeable to what we read in our Evangeliſts, will it follow that theſe fathers had the ſame goſpels before them? To ſay ſo is a manifeſt abuſe of Hiſtory, and quite inexcuſable in writers that knew, or ſhould have known, that theſe fathers made uſe of other goſpels, wherein ſuch paſſages might be contained, or they might be preſerved in unwritten tradition. Beſides which I could almoſt venture to affirm, that theſe fathers of the firſt century do not expreſsly name the goſpels we have of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John." Theſe aſſertions, which in ſome reſpects are well founded, render it of the greateſt importance to every enlightened Chriſtian, carefully to examine the evidences

of

of the eccleſiaſtical writers of the firſt centuries on this ſubject.

In this inquiry we are principally concerned with the period of the three firſt centuries, that is, from the times of the apoſtles down to Origin.—For he has given us the firſt perfect catalogue of the Scriptures of the New Teſtament; and ſince his time theſe catalogues, (or canons), and the evidences for each of the books of the New Teſtament are ſo numerous, that it would be perfectly ſuperfluous to attempt to prove that ſince the fourth century the very ſame books of the New Teſtament were held by Chriſtians to be divine, which we at preſent confeſs to be ſuch [b]. Moreover, ſubſequent information is inadequate to eſtabliſh the authenticity of the Scriptures of

[b] Theſe canons are found according to the order of the centuries, in *Gerhardi de Maſtricht Canon eccleſiaſticus Scripturæ Sacræ.*—The lateſt and beſt edition of this work is that of Jena, 1725, in 8vo.

the

the New Teſtament. It is too recent, and the foregoing centuries were too replete with ſpurious and forged works to be capable of inſtructing us confidently what writings were actually compoſed by the diſciples of Jeſus in the firſt century. But of ſo much greater conſequence to us is the period of the three firſt centuries; and it is a very great error in the defenders of Chriſtianity, when they, either by contenting themſelves merely with the well-known evidences of Euſebius; or, by producing quotations from the primitive writers, which are perfectly indeterminate; or, by accumulating ſuch paſſages from them as have only a ſimilitude in words and ſentiments, bring a ſuſpicion on the whole proof for the authenticity, and conſequently alſo for the divinity, of theſe books.

Whoever has been much engaged with the writings of antiquity, its modes of thinking and manners, will inſtantly perceive,

perceive, on reading theſe books, that they are not the work of an impoſtor, but that they were compoſed about the firſt century of the Roman monarchy; juſt as a connoiſſeur in the fine arts will immediately ſee whether a painting, a ſtatue, or a gem, be the production of antiquity, an original; or merely a copy, and of a modern age. In the Scriptures of the New Teſtament there cannot be diſcovered the ſmalleſt trace of deceit or forgery. On the contrary, the character of the pretended times of their compoſition, and of their pretended authors, is ſo deeply impreſſed on them, that a critic, by a mere peruſal, will diſcover their authenticity.

It muſt appear remarkable to any one who has ever employed himſelf in diſtinguiſhing the genuine remains of antiquity from the ſpurious, that in theſe writings there cannot be found the ſmalleſt veſtige of a forgery. What are called the *Canones* and *Conſtitu-*

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tiones Apoſtolorum, ſpeak of altars, of the ordination of biſhops and prieſts, of the ſubjection of the Holy Ghoſt to the Son. The pretended writings of Dionyſius, a Member of the Court of Areopagus, refute Neſtorian and Anthropomorphitic errors; uſe the word ὑποστασις in the doctrine of the trinity; and ſpeak of monks, altars, and liturgies. And, in the ſame manner, all interpolated writings contain ſomething or other, a cuſtom, a ſcience, an expreſſion, which betrays a later age, and does not eſcape the eye of the critic. On the contrary, we cannot meet with any thing in the Scriptures of the New Teſtament, which does in the leaſt degree contradict the pretended character, time, and connection of their authors. And not only this: we diſcover in them ſuch traces of genuineneſs as are indeed extremely ſtriking.

The writers of the New Teſtament are ſaid to have been *Jews by birth, and*

and of the Jewiſh religion; and this is every where viſible. The mode of relating their ſtory, ſo unaffected, and mixed with various ſuperfluous phraſes, and trifling collateral circumſtances; the numerous alluſions to the religious ceremonies of the Jews; the ſubject matter interwoven with words, phraſes, and thoughts of the Old Teſtament; the numerous parables and allegories; the variety of Hebraic words, conſtructions, and phraſes in the Greek of the New Teſtament, betray an author to whom the Jewiſh mode of thinking was quite natural.

They are ſaid to have *lived in the firſt century of the Roman monarchy.* This alſo is eaſily and every where perceptible. The exact diviſion of the Jewiſh ſtate; its connection with the Romans; the internal tranſactions and fermentations which took place in it at the time of the firſt Roman Emperors, are not ſo properly related by the writer

writer as preſuppoſed as matters of fact, which were univerſally known at the time when he wrote. The little unimportant, foreign events of the firſt century, which in the books of the New Teſtament, and eſpecially in the hiſtorical, are touched on only caſually and very ſlightly, in ſo unſtudied and unaffected a manner, evince a writer, to whoſe memory theſe facts were ſtill quite recent, and who preſuppoſed that his contemporaries were as well acquainted with them as himſelf. I ſhall give examples of this in the courſe of the work.

They are ſaid to have been *immediate witneſſes of their narratives*, or to have themſelves ſeen and heard what they relate. Even this circumſtance is every where clearly diſcoverable. They relate with the confidence of men who are convinced that their readers already know that they themſelves ſaw and experienced all, and that their aſſertions may

may therefore be conſidered as proofs. They relate, without mentioning the eras of their hiſtory, or carefully characteriſing the perſon of whom they make mention: in ſhort, like men who wrote for readers that were their contemporaries, that lived at the very time in which their hiſtory happened, and knew, or might eaſily have known, the perſons themſelves.

They are ſaid to have been *all, except one, unlearned men.* And who does not remark in the writings of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, St. John, St. Peter, St. James, and St. Jude, that they were compoſed by perſons who were indeed perfectly certain of the facts they relate; poſſeſſed alſo of ſound judgment, and in part of excellent natural talents, yet totally devoid of learning, and what is properly called ſcience? We find in their works no profound inferences; no refutations which betray ſubtilty; no expreſſions or ſimilies taken

taken from the walks of ſcience; no acquired knowledge of the world. In every part the tone of an honeſt hiſtorian is perceptible, but of one to whom it never occurred to argue on his narrative as a philoſopher. Compare their writings with thoſe of St. Paul. If we even put out of the queſtion the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, which is replete with Jewiſh learning; yet what profound inferences are drawn in the Epiſtle to the Romans[c]? What a variety of fine knowledge, and how much adroitneſs in defending himſelf with delicacy and ſubtilty againſt the accuſations of his enemies, are betrayed in the Epiſtles to the Corinthians? With what acuteneſs does he oppoſe the doctrine of the neceſſity of circumciſion, and of adherence to the Moſaic law, in the Epiſtle to the Galatians[d]? The Epiſtles to the Epheſians, Philippians, Coloſſians, and Theſ-

[c] Particularly ch. v. 9. [d] ch. iii.—v.

ſalonians, contain a variety of ſimilies taken from profane knowledge; alluſions to foreign cuſtoms; a luxuriance of ideas; pathethic and ſtrong refutations of accuſations[e]. The Epiſtles to Timothy and Titus ſhew in particular a mind which, from experience and philoſophic obſervation of the world, had obtained conſiderable legiſlative knowledge. And the Epiſtle to Philemon has almoſt, if I may be allowed to ſay it, the ſtyle of courtly urbanity.

If, therefore, we knew nothing of the real authors of theſe books, and were to form our judgment of them only from what we diſcover internally, we ſhould ſuppoſe that they were written by native Jews, during the firſt century, and by immediate witneſſes, and that only one of them was a ſcho-

[e] For example, Epheſ. ii. 20—22. iii. 14—19. iv. 9, 10. v. 3. vi. 10—17. Philip. ii. 17. Coloſſ. ii. 14—18. 1 Theſſ. iv. 13—18. &c.

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lar.—This matter deſerves a more ample inquiry.

The Scriptures of the New Teſtament are *compoſed in the Greek language.* This agrees very accurately with the accounts we have of their authors, and of the time and deſign of their compoſition. The Greek language was at that period, in the firſt century of the Roman monarchy, and had been, ſince Alexander the Great, a kind of univerſal language, juſt as the French is at preſent. It was underſtood and ſpoken by Greeks, by Romans, and by Jews. The greater part of the Chriſtians alſo, eſpecially of thoſe to whom the Epiſtles of the New Teſtament are addreſſed, would not have comprehended them ſo univerſally in any other language. At Corinth, Theſſalonica, Coloſſe, and in Galatia, ſcarcely was another language underſtood. Beſides the Latin and Aramæan tongues, the

cutions of the Chriſtians are deſcribed in the words of the 44th Pſalm—*As it is written, For thy ſake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as ſheep for the ſlaughter*: when the murder of the infants at Bethlehem [g] is told alſo in the language of Jeremiah—*In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted*: when the writer of the Epiſtle to the Romans [h] expreſſes the common ſentiment, that he taught Chriſtianity in no place where another had already taught before him, with a paſſage from the Old Teſtament—*I ſtrived to preach the goſpel, not where Chriſt was named —but, as it is written, To whom he was not ſpoken of, they ſhall ſee; and they that have not heard, ſhall underſtand*: what attentive reader will not diſcern from ſuch conſtant and unſolicited

[g] Mat. ii. 17, 18. [h] Chap. xv. 20, 21.

accommo-

accommodations of the phraſeology of the Old Teſtament, a writer to whom the religious language of the Jews was, as it were, a mother-tongue?

The Scriptures of the New Teſtament are all, except thoſe which bear the name of St. Paul, very evidently written in *a ſtyle totally devoid of all cultivation, and with the ſimplicity of unlearned men.* We do not find in them any profound inferences, acute refutations, ſtudied knowledge of the world; or any expreſſions or compariſons taken from aſtronomy, phyſics, anatomy, poeſy, architecture, or indeed from any of the arts or ſciences.—On the contrary, the writers relate, teach, exhort, exactly as men of ſound underſtanding and good principles, but devoid of any cultivation or learning, would relate, teach, and exhort. Common expreſſions of common life; various repetitions, and circumſtances perfectly ſuperfluous; a want of ſtrict con-

nection and method; a faulty conſtruction; theſe conſtitute the language of men, whoſe intellectual powers may be found indeed, but entirely uncultivated.

Not leſs worthy of remark is the *accuracy of many individual circumſtances* of their narrative. Jeſus, they ſay, was born under the Roman Emperour Auguſtus; began his miniſtry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, and was put to death about three years and a half afterwards; that on the feaſt of the Paſſover, Pilate, a Roman Governour, condemned him to death; that St. Paul defended himſelf before the Roman Governours, Feſtus and Felix, before the Jewiſh King Agrippa, &c.—An impoſtor would not write ſo *circumſtantially.*

There are moreover certain *hiſtorical circumſtances* reſpecting the political and religious conſtitutions of the world mentioned in the Scriptures of

the New Teſtament, which point out incontestibly the *time when they were written.* Paleſtine is divided into three provinces—Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. This country at that time is ſubject to the Romans, but had been heretofore ruled by its own kings; the Jews have not the abſolute power of life and death; at Jeruſalem is a Roman Governour. The nation is diſcontented with the Roman ſovereignty; refuſes to pay tribute, and is inclined to revolt. Two religious ſects have the principal ſway among them, viz. the Phariſees and the Sadducees; the former, who teach a mechanical religion, deceive and tyrannize over the people, and yet are almoſt idolized by them; the latter, who adopt an epicurean philoſophy, are ſtrongly ſupported by the principal characters of the nation. The temple of Jeruſalem is ſtill ſtanding, and is annually viſited by a great number of the Jews who are ſcattered abroad

abroad in different parts of the world. Theſe, and ſimilar circumſtances, are rather preſuppoſed as univerſally known, than related by the authors of theſe writings; and they agree moſt exactly with the condition of the Jews and the Roman empire in the *firſt century of the Roman monarchy.*—More will be ſaid on this ſubject hereafter, in the inquiry into the Credibility of theſe writers.

BOOK II.

The external or deciſive Evidence for the Authenticity of the New Teſtament, viz. the poſitive Teſtimonies of Witneſſes in the three firſt Centuries.

CHAP. I.

Witneſſes in the firſt Century.

NOTWITHSTANDING what has been ſaid above, I confeſs that it is not abſolutely impoſſible but that a man of very great talents and extenſive learning might, as it were, abſolutely forget himſelf; might, for a time, lay aſide his natural modes of thinking and manners, and change himſelf into a perfectly different perſon. But the teſtimonies of the oldeſt and moſt credible writers place it beyond all doubt, that the Books of our New Teſtament were written by the *pretended authors*, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, St. John,

John, St. Paul, St. Peter, St. James, and St. Jude, and at the *pretended times*.

In this proof I ſhall quote ſuch paſſages only, wherein theſe writers appeal either *by name*, or *expreſsly* to thoſe books; and honeſtly confeſs the doubts which, to an impartial ſearcher after truth, will occur in this inquiry. I ſhall thus hinder the enemies of Chriſtianity from uſing that argument which Bolingbroke has brought againſt it[1]; and if in this examination nothing be *overcharged*; but, on the contrary, if the *love of truth*, and the *ſtricteſt ſeverity* of inquiry, be every where diſcoverable, additional weight, I truſt, will be given to my proof.

SECT. I.

The Origin and State of Chriſtianity in the firſt Century.

JESUS, the Chriſt, was born in the forty-firſt year of the government of

[1] See above, page 8.

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the Roman Emperour Auguſtus, conſequently four years earlier than the commonly received computation, or one thouſand eight hundred and eight years before the preſent time; he taught perſonally during three years and a half in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee; and at his death left one hundred and fifty followers of his religion, who were all perſons of low birth, and entirely deſtitute of that conſequence which learning or temporal greatneſs can beſtow[k]. About ſeven weeks after his death, the twelve men, who had been his moſt intimate friends, began to preach his religion in the world. On the firſt day of their preaching, they eſtabliſhed in Jeruſalem a community of Chriſtians, conſiſting of more than three thouſand perſons[l]. And in leſs than ſixty years there exiſted numerous and flouriſhing communities of Chriſtians in Aſia, as well in the eaſtern parts towards Perſia,

and

and India, on the Ganges, as in the weſtern; in Africa, at Alexandria and other places; and in Europe, in Macedonia, Greece, nay even at Rome, at that time the metropolis of the world. Thus, at the end of the firſt century, that ſmall unknown fountain, the parent community at Jeruſalem, was become a ſtream, which had ſpread itſelf over every part of the known globe.

Theſe Chriſtian communities formed and ſupported themſelves, notwithſtanding the oppoſition of the whole then exiſting world. The Jews aroſe againſt their members, who taught the abolition of that law which they almoſt idolized, and repreſented him whom they had crucified, as the teacher and Saviour of the world. They were then, as at preſent, diſperſed over all the regions of the known earth; and wherever the Chriſtians came, there they found powerful, enraged, and cruel

cruel enemies. To complete their miſery, the Emperour Nero declared himſelf alſo againſt them, and put many of them to death by means the moſt terrible. Thus oppreſſed and perſecuted on all ſides, they could neither confeſs and practice their religion openly, nor eſtabliſh any external union among themſelves; but every ſeparate community was neceſſitated to endeavour to govern and to ſupport itſelf in the beſt manner it was able. Even in this infant ſtate of Chriſtianity, there aroſe a formal ſchiſm among themſelves: the diſciples, who had been formerly Jews, inſiſted on retaining their paternal law, and mixed with Chriſtianity the ceremonies of Judaiſm; while the gentile converts conſidered the abolition of the law of Moſes to be an eſſential article of the new religion, and would be guided by the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt alone[m].

[m] Acts xv. Rom. xiv.

SECT.

SECT. II.

The Apoſtolical Fathers.

THIS want of external union was ſupplied in a certain degree by different writings, circulated among them by their teachers, of which the greater part is now loſt. Only five works, which make pretenſions to that early age, are come down to us; and theſe bear the names of five men, at that time very celebrated—Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp. They are called *apoſtolical fathers*[a], becauſe

[a] The moſt complete and accurate edition of theſe works is that which was edited by John Baptiſt Cotelier, under the title—S. S. Patrum, qui temporibus Apoſtolorum floruerunt, Barnabæ, Clementis, Hermæ, Ignatii, Polycarpi, opera vera et ſuppoſititia: Una cum Clementis, Ignatii, Polycarpi Actis atque Martyriis; to which he has added very learned annotations and diſſertations. The laſt and beſt edition is that of Amſterdam, 1724, 2 vol. fol. publiſhed under the inſpection of John Le Clerc. Beſides the annotations

becauſe they were the immediate diſciples of the Apoſtles. Their high antiquity, and ſtill more their perfect acquaintance with the Apoſtles, render them particularly important to us in our preſent inquiry.

1. *Barnabas.*

BARNABAS was appointed, in conjunction with St. Paul the moſt eminent of the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity, to publiſh the religion of Chriſt among the Gentiles, after they had made many thouſand converts among the Jews and Samaritans [o]; and is not only placed on a perfect equality with him [p], but is alſo expreſsly ſtiled an

tions of the editor, it contains a variety of new and important additions, which are mentioned in the title. Le Clerc himſelf has pointed out the advantages of this edition in the Biblioth. ancienne et mod. tom. xxi. part 2. p. 237. ſeq. An uſeful abridgement of theſe writings is to be found in Röſler's Library of the Eccleſiaſtical Fathers.

[o] Acts xiii. 2, 3.

[p] Acts xiii. 2. 3. 46. 47. 1 Corinth. ix. 4—7.

Apoſtle [q]. He left behind him an epiſtle, which, according to Clement of Alexandria [r], Origen [s], Euſebius [t], and Jerom [u], was held in the greateſt eſteem by the ancients. But whether the work, which we now have under this name [w], be the very ſame which Barnabas wrote, and the above-mentioned men read,

[q] Acts xiv. 14.—Comp. verſe 4.

[r] Stromata Lib. ii. *cap.* 20. p. 490. Lib. v. *cap.* 8. p. 677. *cap.* 10. p. 683. 84. Potter's Edit. Oxford, 715 fol. In theſe places Clement cites whole paſſages from the Epiſtle of Barnabas, which are likewiſe found in that which we have at preſent.

[s] De principiis Lib. iii. *cap.* 4. p. 140, and contra Celſum Lib. i. *cap.* 63. p. 378. Charles De la Rue, and Charles Vincent De la Rue, have edited at Paris all the genuine works of Origen, which are ſtill extant, 1733—1759. iv. vol. fol. The paſſages pointed out above are in tom. i.—For an account of this edit. of Origen, ſee Erneſti theol. Biblioth. Vol. vii. p. 371.

[t] Hiſtor. Eccles. Lib. vi. *cap.* 13, 14. p. 272. 73. vol. i. edit. Guilielmi Reading, who has edited together the eccleſiaſtical hiſtories of Euſebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, Evagrius, Philoſtorgius, and Theodorus—Cambridge, 720, iii. vol. fol.

[u] De Vir. illuſtr. *cap.* 6.

[w] See Coteler. Patr. Apoſtolic. vol. i. p. 15.—66.

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is here unimportant, ſince it quotes, as we ſhall ſee hereafter, not a ſingle paſſage of the New Teſtament. It contains indeed now the ſame paſſages which Clement and Origen have cited from it. But the unnatural mode of interpretation, (known by the name of myſtical) which prevails in it; the fables of the Hyæna, &c. which the author believed; and the aſſertion that the world would be deſtroyed in its ſix thouſandth year, which is directly contradictory to the aſſurances of the New Teſtament, that the time when it ſhould take place was perfectly unknown, make it certain, that this epiſtle was not written by that Barnabas, who was an Apoſtle. Nevertheleſs, the moſt learned in ancient hiſtory are agreed, that it was compoſed not later than the ſecond century[x]. And we may allow thus much to the teſtimonies of the pri-

[x] See Röſler's Library of the Eccleſiaſtical Fathers, i. 1.

mitive writers, that it was written by a Chriſtian teacher, of the name of Barnabas.

The principal deſign of this epiſtle, is to inculcate the propoſition which St. Paul in his writings ſo often repeats, and labours ſo anxiouſly to prove, namely, that *Chriſtians are free from all obligation to the law of Moſes.* But the author no where refers to this Apoſtle. St. Paul had already at that time written all his Epiſtles: he compoſed the laſt (the ſecond to Timothy) during his ſecond impriſonment at Rome, in the year of Chriſt ſixty-ſeven; and Barnabas wrote his in the year ſeventy. They could not have been unknown to him who was the fellow-apoſtle and aſſiſtant of St. Paul. This is another argument which tends to prove that this epiſtle, even if compoſed by a certain Barnabas, did not come from the celebrated Apoſtle of that name.

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To him who reads this epiſtle without any intention of producing teſtimonies from it in ſupport of the Scriptures of the New Teſtament, ſcarcely any will be perceptible. What might be produced with the greateſt appearance of probability, are two paſſages which have been generally brought forward as an evidence for the Goſpel of St. Matthew[y]. Barnabas is ſpeaking in the ſeventh chapter of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and delivers this as one of his ſayings:—*They who will ſee me and obtain my kingdom, muſt receive me with many ſufferings and afflictions*[z]. And in the fourth chapter he introduces—*Many are called, but few choſen,* as the declaration of certain *divine Scriptures.* For he makes uſe of a phraſe which was commonly em-

y See *Lardner*'s Credibility, vol. ii. p. 14, 15, of the edition of his works, publiſhed in 1788.

z Ουτω, φησιν, οι θελοντις με ιδειν και ἁψασθαι μου της βασιλειας, οφειλουσι θλιβεντις και παθοντις λαβειν με.—Cotel. p. 24.

ployed by the Jews when they quoted their ſacred books, *It is written.*—*Let us beware*, ſays he[a], *leſt it ſhould happen to us, as it is written, There are many called, few choſen.*

Theſe paſſages, it is true, exiſt in the ſame, or in very ſimilar words in the Goſpel of St. Matthew. But our author does not point out, by a ſingle word, by *whom* thoſe expreſſions were written, or *where* they are to be found. The firſt paſſage does not even prove that the declaration of Chriſt alluded to, had been taken from any written information. He might, with equal probability, have received it from the oral narration of the Apoſtles. And with reſpect to the ſecond, I find no trace, that Barnabas means here expreſsly the Goſpel of St. Matthew. If

[a] Almoſt the five firſt chapters are wanting in the original. In the old Latin verſion the paſſage ſtands thus, p. 60:—Adtendamus ergo, ne forte, *ſicut ſcriptum eſt*, Multi vocati, pauci electi, inveniamur.

a perſon,

a perſon, for example, ſhould read in Plutarch—"We find it related, that the letter of Marcellus, on being received at Rome, did not alleviate the ſorrow of the Romans, but rather inſtilled more terror into them[b];" he would conclude from this paſſage—"that in the time of Plutarch, credible documents concerning the affairs of the Romans ſomewhere exiſted;"—but he would not be inclined to prove from it, that Livy had written a Roman hiſtory.

If we caſt our eyes on the catalogue of ſcriptural paſſages, which the Apoſtolical Fathers are ſaid to have quoted,

[b] This paſſage is actually found in the above mentioned author, in his life of Marcellus, Vitar. Parall. vol. ii. p. 273. edit. London. 729. in v. vol. 4to. He is ſpeaking of a letter, in which the Proconſul comforts the Romans after a ſevere defeat which they had ſuffered from Hannibal, in this manner:—"For he himſelf was on his march to drive Hannibal out of the country.—Και ταυτα μεν, (continues Plutarch) ὁ Διβιος φησιν αναγινωσθεντα τα γραμματα μη της λυπης αφελειν αλλα τῳ φοβῳ προσθειναι."

in the ſecond volume of Cotelerius, and then reflect that their genuine remains are extremely ſhort, we ſhall be induced to conclude that theſe authors have done nothing elſe than copy the Bible. Lardner, indeed, is more rigid in the ſelection of theſe teſtimonies; yet the greater part of the paſſages which he has quoted are in no reſpect convincing. I will not delay the reader with the conſideration of the other teſtimonies[c], as I have ſhewn by the two paſſages which are generally dwelt upon as of the greateſt weight, that Barnabas cannot be placed in the number of evidences for the Authenticity of the New Teſtament.

[c] "Give to every one that aſketh thee"—Παντι αιτουντι σε διδου, ſays Barnabas, ch. 19. It is pretended that this is a proof of his having read the Goſpel of St. Matthew, becauſe the ſame command is found in it, ch. v. 42. Dr. Lardner himſelf perceives the weakneſs of this proof; and therefore ſays, p. 16—"It may be queſtioned, whether he refers at all to any *written goſpel*."

2. *Clemens*

2. *Clement of Rome.*

UNDER the name of Clement, who was Biſhop of Rome, and an aſſiſtant of the Apoſtle St. Paul[d], we have different writings; but of theſe only the two epiſtles to the Chriſtian community at Corinth can offer any pretenſion to this title.

Of the *ſecond* epiſtle, as it is called, there is only a fragment remaining[e], which nevertheleſs exhibits pretty evident marks of forgery. Irenæus[f] was acquainted with only one epiſtle of Clement, and from this he has quoted.

[d] Philip. iv. 3.

[e] See Coteler. vol. i. 185—189. John Lewis Frey alſo has publiſhed an accurate edition of the works of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, (Baſel. 1742. 8vo.) which I ſhall uſe for the purpoſe of quotation in the following work, on account of its conveniency. What remains of that which is called the ſecond epiſtle, ſtands p. 88—103.

[f] Adverſus hæreſes, Lib. iii. cap. 3. § 3. p. 176, of the edition which was publiſhed at Paris, by Renatus Maſſuet, 1710, fol.

Euſebius

Euſebius[g] was indeed informed of this ſecond epiſtle; but he rejects it, becauſe he cannot diſcover any traces of it among the ancients. Dionyſius, Biſhop of Corinth, in the ſecond century, mentions only one epiſtle; and both Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, have quoted the firſt, but never noticed the ſecond, as has been remarked by Grabe[h].—The tenour itſelf of this fragment betrays, that it is not the work of Clement: for it cites the Goſpels often, and by name, which is univerſally contrary to the cuſtom of the genuine epiſtle[i].

[g] Hiſt. Eccl. Lib. iii. cap. 38. p. 134.—ἀτε μη τους αρχαιους αυτη κεχρημενους ισμεν.

[h] In the Spicileg. Patrum et hæreticorum Seculi, 1—3, which was publiſhed at Oxford, 1698 and 1700, in 2 vol. in 8vo. Vol. i. p. 266—69.

[i] See Lardner's Credibility, vol. ii. p. 49.—The ſame circumſtance makes me ſuſpect the genuineneſs of the two Syriac epiſtles, which Wetſtein has publiſhed at the end of his Greek Teſtament, and defended as genuine. But the ſilence of antiquity, and the recommendation of celibacy found therein, compel us abſolutely to reject them.

But

But the teſtimonies of the ancients, for what is called the *firſt* epiſtle, are much more numerous and complete[k]. Beſides the paſſages quoted above, we find in Euſebius, in two different places, very ample information concerning it. In the third book of the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, chap. xvi[l]. he ſays—"Of this Clement we have an important and excellent epiſtle, which is univerſally received as genuine. He wrote it in the name of the community at Rome to that at Corinth, in which great diſſenſions at that time exiſted. This epiſtle is read, as we know, agreeably to an old cuſtom, in moſt of the churches. And that ſuch diſſenſions did actually at that time exiſt at Corinth, Hegeſippus is an incontrovertible evidence." The epiſtle then which the ancients held to be a genuine work of the Roman Cle-

[k] It ſtands in Cotelerius, vol. i. p. 145—181. and in Frey, p. 1—78.

[l] Page 107, 168.

ment,

ment, was written in the name of the community at Rome to the Chriſtians at Corinth, on account of ſome diſſenſions which had ariſen among them.— In the thirty-eighth chapter of the ſame book, he points out the contents of that epiſtle more amply. "In this epiſtle," ſays he[m], "Clement uſes many ſentiments taken from the Epiſtle to the Hebrews; he even quotes ſome word for word: and hence it is manifeſt, that that Epiſtle (to the Hebrews) is not a modern compoſition, but in all probability has been juſtly placed among the writings of the Apoſtle (St. Paul). This epiſtle which St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews in their mother-tongue, was tranſlated, as ſome aſſert, by the Evangeliſt St. Luke; or, according to the opinion of others, by this very Clement; and the latter ſuppoſition is the more probable, becauſe the epiſtle of Clement, and that to the Hebrews, are

[m] Page 134.

written

written in a ſimilar ſtyle, and the ſentiments in both works tolerably well harmoniſe together."

The epiſtle which we ſtill poſſeſs agrees accurately with this deſcription. It is written in the name of the community at Rome to the Chriſtians at Corinth, and to diſſuade them from diſſenſions and factions, and particularly from an oppoſition to their Preſbyters, or Teachers.—The importance and excellence which Euſebius, and the force which Irenæus, in the above-mentioned paſſage, ſaw in it, muſt be aſcribed to that inclination of the ancients to conſider every thing as beautiful, excellent and forcible, which came from a venerable teacher. The epiſtle, judged impartially, is written in a tedious ſtyle; the author repeats the ſame ſubject, probably ten times, without giving it additional force, is rich in unmeaning epithets, wreſts ſcriptural paſſages to his purpoſe, and often extends

tends a matter too far, in order to deduce from it an argument which he ſuppoſed good and edifying. Notwithſtanding theſe defects, it is one of the moſt valuable remains of antiquity. Even its great age makes it reſpectable; for at the lateſt it was compoſed in the laſt ten years of the firſt century; moſt probably about the year 96[a]. The credit of its author, and particularly the circumſtance of its having been written in the name of an entire and very conſiderable community, add extraordinary weight to its teſtimony. It thus becomes a public document, and contains not the evidence of a private individual, but of the whole Church at Rome.

We muſt therefore greatly regret, that it now appears neither ſufficiently

[a] Formerly I was of the uſual opinion, that this epiſtle was written *before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem*. But Lardner has produced arguments, which appear to me *incontrovertible*, that it muſt be aſcribed to the year 96.—Credibility, vol. ii. p. 23—28.

correct

correct nor perfect. Only a ſingle manuſcript of it is come down to us. In this ſome leaves are wanting; and this defect appears to be in that very part which regards the information on the ſcriptural books. For in all probability that is wanting which Euſebius, in the above-mentioned paſſage[o], and Irenæus Adv. hæres[p], have quoted from it.—Euſebius ſays, that Clement in this epiſtle, had adopted many ſentiments of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, and even tranſcribed ſome paſſages. The former are found indeed in the epiſtle, which ſtill exiſts, but not the latter: unleſs we ſuppoſe that the words of Euſebius are not to be taken in their moſt literal meaning. But Irenæus, in proof of the antiquity of the then prevailing doctrine, appeals to this epiſtle of Clement. "In it," theſe are his words, "he delivers the doctrine which he had very lately received from the

[o] B. iii. ch. 38. [p] Lib. iii. cap. 3. § 3. p. 176.

Apoſtles;

Apoſtles; viz. that there is one Almighty God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth; who formed man, brought in the deluge, called Abraham, conducted the Jewiſh people out of Egypt, ſpake to Moſes, gave the law and ſent the prophets; who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels; that this God is declared by the Church to be the Father of Jeſus Chriſt, every one who chooſes may ſee himſelf from this epiſtle[q]."

[q] The Five Books againſt Hereſies, by Irenæus, are extant at preſent, except a few fragments preſerved by Greek eccleſiaſtical writers, only in an antient Latin verſion. In the paſſage quoted above, the tranſlator uſes the word *Scriptura*—" Ex ipſa *Scriptura*, qui velint, diſcere poſſunt."—Probably, therefore, the word in the original was γραφη. But the tranſlator in the ſection juſt preceding, which Euſebius has preſerved in the Greek, having rendered the ſame word by *Epiſtle*, ought alſo to have tranſlated it in the ſame manner here; ἐπιστειλεν ἡ ἐν Ῥωμῃ ἐκκλησια γραφην ἱκανωτατην τοις Κορινθιοις, he tranſlates—Scripſit, quæ eſt Romæ, eccleſia, potentiſſimas *literas* Corinthiis.—This remark proves how void of foundation is the accuſation which is made by the enemies of Chriſtianity, that Irenæus in this place pronounces the epiſtle of Clement to be *(Scriptura)* a divine Scripture.

All

All this alſo is wanting in the epiſtle which has deſcended to us. Irenæus does not indeed poſitively aſſert, (as Mill on Matth. xxv. 41. appears to adopt) that Clement had taken that doctrine from the apoſtolical writings; he only ſays, that he had received it from the Apoſtles. Nevertheleſs, his information ſtill proves, that *as early as the firſt century the very ſame ſyſtem, in reſpect to the above-mentioned points, was adopted by the Chriſtians, which we find in our preſent Scriptures of the New Teſtament.*— Perhaps Clement had been more copious on this ſubject, which Irenæus has only quoted in the form of extracts. If this be the caſe, the loſs is of ſtill greater moment.

Clement in this epiſtle appeals *by name* to an Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, in which he ſpeaks of factions among them; one of which declared Peter, another Apollos, and a

third Paul for their head[r]. In order to recommend unity and univerſal love to the Corinthians, he uſes a ſimilitude. "Conſider," ſays he[s], "our bodies. The head is nothing without the feet, ſo neither the feet without the head. Even the moſt inconſiderable members are very neceſſary and uſeful to the whole body. They all harmoniſe with, and are ſubject to, one another, for the preſervation of the whole." St. Paul uſes[t] the very ſame ſimilitude for the very ſame purpoſe.—In the forty-ſixth chap. (p. 69) he exhorts them to unity

[r] Ch. xlvii. p. 70.—"Look into the Epiſtle of St. Paul the Apoſtle. What has he there written to you in the very beginning, in the beginning of Chriſtianity?" (Thus I render the words, εν αρχῃ Ευαγγελιου, which phraſe is commonly uſed in this ſenſe by the eccleſiaſtical writers. This muſt not therefore be underſtood of a Goſpel written by St. Paul; which is alſo evident from the context.)—"Through the inſtigation of the Spirit, he admoniſhes you concerning himſelf and Peter and Apollos, becauſe that even then you did form parties."

[s] Ch. xxxvii. p. 57.

[t] 1 Corinth. xii. 12—26.

and love, "becauſe they would otherwiſe lacerate the members of Chriſt, and tear them from one another; and would rage againſt their own bodies, and moſt ſenſeleſsly forget, *that we are members one of another.*" St. Paul alſo, 1 Cor. xii. 27. has employed the ſame argument.—He makes [u] a repreſentation of charity, which is taken almoſt entirely from 1 Cor. xiii. "Charity covers a multitude of ſins. It undertakes all work, it bears all with patience. In charity there is no meanneſs, no pride.—Charity does all things with unity. Through charity the choſen of God are made perfect."—Thus much then is *unqueſtionable* from the evidence of Clement, that the *Firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians*, was actually written by the Apoſtle *Paul*, in *the firſt century.*

In the thirty-ſixth chapter [w], Clement makes the very ſame compariſon

[u] Ch. xlix. p. 73. [w] Page 55, 56.

between Chriſt and the angels; and uſes the very ſame arguments to prove his divinity, as are found in the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, chap. i. 3—13. The whole paſſage deſerves to be ſubmitted to the reader, that he may himſelf judge of its concordance with the above-mentioned part of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews.—Clement had before ſaid of Jeſus, That he alone was the High Prieſt, through whom God would lead us to the enjoyment of immortal wiſdom; "who," he continues, "is the brightneſs of his Majeſty, (απαυγασμα της μεγαλωσυνης αυτου) and by ſo much greater than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For ſo it is written: (Pſalm civ. 4.) Who maketh his angels ſpirits, and his miniſters a flame of fire. But of his Son, thus ſaid the Lord: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Aſk of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inhe-

inheritance, and the whole earth (τα περατα της γης) for thy poſſeſſion. And again he ſaith unto him, Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footſtool."—However accurately this paſſage may harmoniſe with the firſt chapter of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, yet I do not pretend to draw a concluſion from it for the authenticity of that Epiſtle. Clement might have derived all theſe expreſſions concerning Chriſt, and theſe proofs from the *oral* information of an Apoſtle. If the authenticity of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews be not yet determined, (which in this place muſt neceſſarily be the caſe), then it is equally poſſible that the author of this epiſtle copied from Clement, as that the latter copied from the former.

For the ſame reaſons I muſt judge in a ſimilar manner of the paſſages which nearly reſemble thoſe in our preſent Goſpels of St. Matthew, St.

Mark, and St. Luke.—In the thirteenth chapter[x] he exhorts the Corinthians to forbearance and brotherly kindneſs in theſe words: "Let us eſpecially remember the commands of the Lord Jeſus,—for thus he ſaid, Be merciful, ſo ſhall ye find mercy. Forgive, ſo ſhall it be forgiven unto you. As you do, ſo ſhall it be done unto you. As you give, ſo ſhall it be given unto you. As you judge, ſo ſhall you be judged; as you ſhew kindneſs, ſo ſhall kindneſs be ſhewn unto you. With what meaſure you mete, with the ſame it ſhall be meaſured unto you." Similar commands of Jeſus actually exiſt in Matt. vii. 1. and Luke vi. 36—38. But Clement does not once affirm in this paſſage, that he derived them from any *written* information. He, and alſo the Corinthians to whom he wrote, might have received them *orally* from the Apoſtles. —In the ſame manner he reminds them[y]

[x] Page 20. [y] Chap. 46. p. 70.

of

of another precept of Jeſus. "Remember the words of Jeſus, who ſaid, Woe to that man; it were better for him, that he had never been born, than that he ſhould offend one of my elect. It were better for him that a millſtone ſhould be faſtened to him, and that he ſhould be drowned in the ſea, than he ſhould offend one of my little ones." This agrees almoſt verbatim with the diſcourſe of Jeſus, in Matthew xviii. 6. Mark ix. 42. Luke xvii. 1, 2.—But it does not therefore follow, that the paſſages were taken from theſe *ſcriptures*. Clement might have known them from *oral information*; or other lives of Jeſus might exiſt from which he ſelected them; for St. Luke in his Goſpel, i. 1. actually declares, that in his time many ſuch lives of Jeſus were read among the Chriſtians. From this cauſe Lardner[z] alſo is in doubt, whether he could call

[z] Credibility, vol. ii. p. 31—33.

theſe paſſages teſtimonies for the hiſtorical truth of the books of our New Teſtament.

Whatever beſides is uſually quoted from the epiſtle of Clement for the Authenticity of the New Teſtament, is of infinitely leſs value. Some of theſe ſentences agree with our New Teſtament only in common-place maxims, or indeed only in a word or two.—"Let us come up," ſays Clement[a], "to the glorious and venerable rule of our holy calling." This, it is pretended, is a quotation from the paſſage, 2 Tim. i. 9. "Who hath called us with an holy calling."—"Nothing," ſays he in another place[b], "is impoſſible with God, but to lye;" which is pretended to be taken from Heb. vi. 18. where ſomething ſimilar is ſaid of God. We might in this manner prove that Seneca, Plutarch, nay even Socrates and Plato, had quoted the New Teſta-

[a] Chap. vii. p. 11. [b] Chap. xxvii. p. 42.

ment,

ment.—Others, indeed, have a greater reſemblance in thought and expreſſion; but they are not therefore *of neceſſity* taken from our New Teſtament. Clement might have learnt them through perſonal intercourſe with the Apoſtles, or have borrowed them from the books of the Old Teſtament[c], or from other Chriſtian writings[d] which then exiſted.

Dr. Mill,

[c] For inſtance, in the 30th chap. p. 45, he quotes a paſſage, yet without naming its author.—"For God," ſays he, "reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."—This ſentence is found indeed in James iv. 6.; but it ſtands alſo in Proverbs iii. 34.

[d] The author of what is called the ſecond epiſtle, is ſpeaking of the wicked, chap. iv. p. 93. and then adds—"Concerning theſe the Lord has ſaid, Though ye ſhould be joined unto me, even in my very boſom, and keep not my commandments, I would reject you, and ſay unto you, Depart from me, I know you not, whence you are, you workers of iniquity."—This paſſage is evidently ſimilar to that in Matt. vii. 23. Nevertheleſs, it is not taken thence, but from an *apocryphal* book. In the ſame manner Clement, when he quotes the diſcourſes or actions of Chriſt, may have taken them from ſome other hiſtory that was extant when he wrote. For the other hiſtorians of the life of

lation of St. John perhaps excepted. For Clement wrote his epiſtle after the death of the Apoſtles Paul and Peter[e]. —Secondly: in the xxiv—xxvi. and in the I. chap. p. 39—42, and p. 74, 75, he attempts to prove the reſurrection of the dead, and quotes for that purpoſe many paſſages from the Old Teſtament, all of which in fact prove nothing. *Whence is it then, that he quotes not a ſingle one among the great number of far clearer paſſages in the New Teſtament, particularly in the firſt Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Corinthians?* What could be more deciſive to the Corinthians, to whom he wrote, than the determination of the Apoſtle, who had wrought ſo many miracles among them, and of whoſe divine inſpiration they had no doubt?

Having frequently made theſe difficulties the ſubject of my conſideration, it appears to me that much may

[e] Chap. v. p. 9, 10.

be

be ſaid to leſſen, if not entirely to remove, their force.—As to the firſt, I anſwer, That Clement very rarely makes his quotations from the Old Teſtament by name; but almoſt conſtantly only according to their contents. Nor was it very cuſtomary for the ancient writers to quote *by name*, as may be ſeen for inſtance in the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, in which the author quotes generally according to the contents only, or with an indeterminate phraſe, "one in a certain place teſtified[f]." Moreover, Clement preſumed that the contents of the New Teſtament were already known to the Chriſtians at Corinth. But this he could not preſume in reſpect of the Old Teſtament, which was generally unknown to the heathen converts.—With regard to the ſecond difficulty, it appears to me that the immediate object of Clement was not ſo much to prove

[f] Chap. i. ii.

the

the truth of this doctrine of Chriſtianity, as to ſhew its harmony with the doctrine of the Old Teſtament. For this reaſon he quotes, however ill-applied, paſſages of the Old Teſtament excluſively, and in ſuch profuſion. The doctrine itſelf he preſuppoſes to be true, and to be believed. The beginning of the 47th chap.—"Receive the Epiſtle of the Holy Paul; what has he there written to you?" rendered all further quotations of particular paſſages of this epiſtle unneceſſary.

3. *Hermas.*

WE have an ancient writing under the title of Paſtor[t], or Shepherd, which bears the name of Hermas, whom St. Paul, Romans xvi. 14. enumerates among thoſe to whom he particularly ſends ſalutation. It contains, as we have it at preſent, three books. In the firſt, which has the title *Viſiones*,

[t] It ſtands in Cotelerius, vol. i. p. 75—126.

are

are four viſions. The Church of God appears to him four times, in the form of an old woman, gives him various doctrines, (which are very common-place, and not always juſt) and particularly informs him, that the Chriſtians had much tribulation to expect, but that they might overcome it by patience and prayer.—After ſome time appears a venerable man, in the habit of a ſhepherd, and dictates to him as he writes, twelve commands, which contain a kind of catechetical inſtruction in morality, very incomplete, and in part bad and unchriſtian. Theſe are the contents of the ſecond book, which is therefore called *Mandata.*—Again, this venerable man dictates to him certain types, compariſons, and narratives, in which are veiled certain moral truths, and the future fortunes of the church. Theſe compoſe the third book, which on this account is entitled *Similitudines.*—The work was written originally

nally in Greek. But we have now only an ancient Latin verſion[h], except a few fragments preſerved in the Greek fathers, and which may be ſeen in Cotelerius.

If we were to form our judgment of the author from the book itſelf, we ſhould ſuppoſe it to have been written by one who was *a Jew by birth*, and who *lived in the firſt century*. The rigid adherence to faſts, and high idea of their meritorioufneſs[i]; the figurative and allegorical kind of repreſentation[k]; the quoting of the book *Heldam et Modal*[l]; and the Hebrew name given

[h] Whoever deſires to be further informed concerning the opinions of learned men on theſe writings of the apoſtolical period, may conſult the firſt vol. of Le Nourry Apparatus ad bibliothecam maximam Patrum et antiquorum Scriptorum eccles. Lugduni edit. in which every thing that belongs to the ſubject is treated with great accuracy and copiouſneſs. The account of the Paſtor is to be found, p. 47—70.

[i] See Similitud. V.

[k] See the Viſiones and the Similitudines.

[l] Viſio. ii. §. 3. p. 77.—"The Lord is nigh to them that

given [m] to the angel, or, as others explain it, to the frightful beaſt which appeared to him; theſe evidently betray a writer, who was educated in the Jewiſh mode of thinking.—And that it was compoſed in the firſt century, is probable from the firſt book. In this the old woman foretells the fortunes of the church, and indeed in a very myſterious manner. But all her prophecies are ſo general and indeterminate, that nothing more can be learnt from them than that, "the Chriſtians were to be greatly perſecuted." Now had the author lived later, in the ſe-

that turn unto him, at it is written in the book of Heldam and Modal, who propheſied to the people in the wilderneſs." Theſe are the words of the author himſelf. The hiſtory to which he alludes, is found in Numb. xi. 26, 27. But the Hebrew names of theſe prophets are Eldad and Medad. In the Synopſ. Scripturæ S. which is known under the name of Athanaſius, there is a book Heldam and Modal mentioned among the apocryphal writings of the Old Teſtament.

[m] The name in the work itſelf is Hegrin, הגרין. See Viſio. iv. §. 2. p. 83. & Not. Oxonienſ. in loc.

cond, or even third century for inſtance, he would certainly have made his propheteſs to give a more determinate and complete deſcription of thoſe perſecutions; of the tyrants who ſhould command them; of the cruelties, and modes of torment and death which ſhould hereafter be made uſe of; and ſubjects of the like nature. —The author, it may be added, who in the whole compoſition appears to have been a good, though an ill-informed man, calls himſelf Hermas, and aſſures his reader, that he wrote it at Rome[n], and at the time when Clement was Biſhop of that church[o]. We perceive, therefore, even without external evidence, that it is extremely probable that this work came from the apoſtolical Hermas. And this is corroborated

[n] Viſio. i. §. 1. p. 75.

[o] For in Viſio. ii. §. 4. p. 78. he receives a command to write two copies of this prophecy, and to ſend one of them to Clement, who would tranſmit it to the foreign cities.

by

by the expreſs teſtimonies of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Euſebius, Athanaſius, and Jerom, who not only inform us, that the apoſtolical Hermas did really leave us ſuch a book, but they alſo quote from it many and long paſſages, and theſe exactly agreeing with our preſent copies[p]. We cannot therefore refuſe to attribute this book to the above-mentioned writer, without bringing into ſuſpicion the whole of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory.

Euſebius gives us the following information concerning the Paſtor, which many in his time ſuppoſed to have been written by the apoſtolical Hermas, "That ſome believed it to be a very uſeful book, as an introduction to religion, and that it was therefore read publicly in the churches[q]." This opinion agrees very

[p] Theſe paſſages are collected together in Cotelerius, vol. i. p. 68—72. where they may be ſeen all at one view.

[q] Ὑφ' ἑτέρων ἀναγκαιοτατον, ὡς μάλιστα δεῖ τοι-

 χειωσεως

very well with the work which we have at preſent. Its ſtyle is entirely adapted to the ſenſes. The Similitudines in which the writer clothes his inſtruction, are nothing more than a collection of ſimilies, taken from common objects, for inſtance, from a vine, a green tree, or a flock. This is the caſe alſo with the Mandata and Viſiones. And thus we in modern times compoſe books of inſtruction for children; but indeed with this difference, that it is written in a rough and unpoliſhed ſtyle. The whole plan of the book is, if I may uſe the expreſſion, dramatic; as if adapted to children and beginners. The author does not teach, but relates. The firſt book is the narrative of his conferences with a venerable matron; and the other two contain the relation of his converſation with a ſhepherd.

χειωσεως εισαγωγικης, κεκριται δθεν ηδη και εν εκκλησιαις, ισμεν αυτο δεδημοσιευμενον. Hist. Eccl. Lib. III. cap. iii. p. 90.

Theſe

Theſe converſations are throughout dramatic. A ſplendid tower is erected by a variety of artiſts, and compoſed of ſtones of every ſpecies. Hermas walks into the country; here his inſtructor points out now a vine, now a tree juſt ſhooting forth its leaves; and, at every proſpect, takes occaſion to inſtruct him.—The writer of this book is ſometimes repreſented as an enthuſiaſt who fancied that he ſaw a variety of viſions, and heard revelations. We might with equal juſtice, on account of the fairy tales in her Magazine for children, call Beaumont a fanatic.

This form in which Hermas has compoſed his book, did not certainly afford him any opportunity to quote paſſages from the Bible, as proofs in his ſyſtem of inſtruction. Many ſimilar thoughts and expreſſions have been produced, of which Lardner [r] has col-

[r] Credibility, vol. ii. p. 52—65.

lected a great number. But although this work is nearly as large as all the other writings of the apoſtolical fathers taken together, yet we cannot diſcover in it any where a ſingle ſcriptural book cited expreſsly, and by name.

4. *Ignatius.*

IGNATIUS was Biſhop of Antioch; at the command of the Emperour Trajan, becauſe he could not be prevailed on to renounce Chriſtianity, he was conducted to Rome in the year of Chriſt, 106, in order to fight with wild beaſts exhibited at the public games; he remained conſtant, and was torn to pieces by lions in the amphitheatre. His ſeven genuine epiſtles [a] ſtand in Cotelerius, vol. ii. p. 11—42, and in Frey's edit. immediately after the epiſ-

[a] Beſides the Original, which is written in the Greek language, there is extant alſo an ancient Latin verſion, which is found in Cotelerius, p. 124—131.

tles

des of Clement, p. 1—73. Theſe are tolerably well purified[t] from modern interpolations. I ſay tolerably well, for even the ſmaller edition appears in certain places, to be ſtill ſuſpicious.—In all theſe epiſtles, only a *ſingle* book of the New Teſtament is expreſsly *named* by him, which is St. Paul's *Epiſtle to the Epheſians.* Among the advantages belonging to the Epheſians, which Ignatius notices in his epiſtle to this community[u], he diſtinguiſhes this in particular, *that they had received the knowledge of the myſtery of the holy Paul.* "You are," ſays he, "fellow-partners in the myſtery of the holy Paul—who in his whole Epiſtle, makes honourable mention of you, as true

[t] See Jacobi Uſſerii diſſertationes de Ignatii Epiſtolis, in Cotelerius, vol. ii. p. 199. ſeq. but particularly, Joannis Pearſonii Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, ibid. p. 251. ſq. and Joan. Clerici. diſſ. de Ignatii Epiſtolis; ibid. p. 501. ſq. and Prof. Schroeckh's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, vol. ii. p. 337. of the Original.

[u] §. xii. p. 49.

members of Jeſus Chriſt[*]." St. Paul names the important doctrine to the publication of which he was peculiarly called, that is, the doctrine of the equal participation of the grace of God through Jeſus by the Heathens and Jews, the Myſtery, the heretofore unknown doctrine, μυστηριον[†]. On this account Ignatius calls the Epheſians Fellow-partners in the myſtery of Paul, (Παυλου συμμυστας) and reminds them of the praiſes which the Apoſtle had frequently beſtowed on them in his Epiſtle; that he might thereby excite in them a noble ambition.—We have therefore in this paſſage an *expreſs evidence for the Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Epheſians.* For the ſuppoſition of the author of the "Letter concerning

[*] Παυλου συμμυσται του ἡγιασμενου,—ὁς εν πασῃ επιστολῃ μνημονυει ὑμων εν Χριστῳ Ιησου. That μνημονευειν sometimes means *to make honourable mention of one* is well known; ſhould a proof of this be required, I refer the reader to Lardner, Credibility, vol. ii. p. 70.

[†] Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Epheſ. iii. 3—9.

the

the perſons to whom St. Paul wrote what is called the Epiſtle to the Epheſians[y]," that inſtead of μνημονευει muſt be read μνημονευω, is a conjecture which not only contradicts (as Lardner has obſerved on the cited paſſage) all manuſcripts, but deſtroys alſo the whole connection of the twelfth ſection.

In the epiſtle to the Philadelphians[z], he gives them as it were an account of the ſources from which he had drawn his faith. "I flee to the Goſpel, as to the body of Chriſt; and to the Apoſtles, as to the preſbytery of the church. Let us alſo reſpect the Prophets; for they likewiſe publiſhed to men, that they ſhould ground their hope on the Goſpel and on Jeſus, and expect his coming[a]." Every one will acknowledge that

[y] See Benſon's Hiſtory of the firſt planting of the Chriſtian religion.

[z] §. v. p. 48, 49.

[a] Προσφυγων τω ευαγγελιω, ως σαρκι Ιησου, και τοις αποστολοις, ως πρεσβυτεριω της εκκλησιας. Και τους προφητας δε αγαπωμεν, δια το και αυτους εις το ευαγγελιον

that by 'the Prophets,' Ignatius means the writings of the Prophets of the Old Teſtament. Without doubt then he underſtands by 'the Goſpel,' the writings of the Evangeliſts; and by 'the Apoſtles,' the writings of the Apoſtles.—Again, when he warns them [b] againſt a love of diſputation, and exhorts them to act in all things according to the doctrine of Chriſt, he repreſents to them his own example. "Hearing ſome perſons declare," ſaid he,

ευαγγελιον κατηγγελκεναι και εις αυτον ελπιζειν, και αυτον αναμενειν.—Commentators have given a variety of opinions to account for Ignatius calling the Goſpel σαρξ Ιησου. This appears to me to be the moſt natural cauſe, becauſe it promulgates the accompliſhment of the promiſes of the Old Teſtament. Theſe are generally called the *ſhadow*, and Chriſt the ſubſtance, or *body*. Or this may be the reaſon, as Le Clerc has remarked on the paſſage, that he put as much confidence in the contents of the Goſpel, as if Jeſus were ſtill alive, and aſſured him of its truth.—The laſt words are obſcure in the way they are uſually rendered. The tranſlation given above appears to me to convey the true ſenſe of the author.

[b] §. viii. p. 51, 52.

he, "I believe nothing but what I find in the ancients, (or, according to another reading, the archives) viz. in the Goſpel, I anſwered, but it is there written. And thereby I brought them to acknowledge that they would believe [c]." — From theſe paſſages thus

[c] I will ſubjoin this difficult paſſage, on which the commentators are ſo much at variance, in order that the reader may, without further trouble, examine the translation which I have given above. Εγω ηκουσα τινων λεγοντων ὁτι εαν μη εν τοις αρχαιοις, (or, according to a different reading, αρχειοις) ἐυρω, εν τῳ ευαγγελιῳ, ου πιστευω. Και λεγοντος μου αυτοις, ὁτι γεγραπται, απεκριθησαν μοι, ὁτι προκειται. Ignatius, in the preceding ſixth ſection, had exhorted the Philadelphians to beware of thoſe, who produced every kind of Jewiſh tenet, but were abſolutely ſilent concerning Jeſus Chriſt. I tranſlate therefore the laſt words ὁτι προκειται, *Itaque propoſitum eſt*, namely, credere; and underſtand the paſſage in this manner, that in their diſputations they ſhould truſt excluſively to the decifions of the Goſpel, and endeavour to convince their opponents therefrom with all gentleneſs.—A ſimilar paſſage is found in Epictetus, in Arriani diſſertation. Epict. Lib. iv. cap. 5. edit. Joan. Upton, tom. i. p. 599. He had taught in the preceding part, "that we ſhould conſtantly live agreeably to nature," and adds, Τουτο γαρ εστιν, ὁ αει προκειται τῳ καλῳ και αγαθῳ.

much

much is clear, that in the time of Ignatius there exiſted certain writings of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles, formed into *a collection*. Their nature and number however is uncertain, ſince he has given us no catalogue of them.

In theſe epiſtles are alſo many ſentiments and expreſſions, which appear to have been borrowed from the Scriptures of our New Teſtament.—In the epiſtle to the community at Smyrna[d], Ignatius ſays of Jeſus, "That he was according to the fleſh, truly of the family of David, and a ſon of God, according to the will and power of God." St. Paul ſpeaks of him almoſt in the ſame manner, Rom. i. 3, 4.—To the Epheſians [e] he writes, "The croſs of Chriſt is a ſtumbling block unto unbelievers; but to us ſalvation and eternal life. Where is now the wiſe, and the profound inquirer? Where is the boaſting of them that are called learned?"

[d] §. i. p. 2. [e] §. xviii. p. 32.

St.

St. Paul makes the ſame remark on the evangelical doctrine, 1 Cor. i. 18—31. —Ignatius exhorts the Magneſians in almoſt the very words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. v. 7. 8. "Caſt away the evil leaven, which is become old and ſour; and be transformed into a new maſs, which is Chriſt[f]."—In the epiſtle to Polycarp[g], he recommends that he ſhould exhort the men "to love their wives, even as Chriſt loves his church." This excellent command is found in Eph. v. 25. —The many other paſſages in which the New Teſtament is ſaid to have been quoted[h], have either only a very diſtant ſimilitude[i], or are evidently different[k].

Ignatius may therefore be produced as a clear evidence for *the Epiſtle of*

[f] §. x. p. 42.

[g] §. v. p. 16.

[h] See Lardner's Credibility of the G. H. vol. ii. p. 70—85.

[i] As for example, in Lardner, Numb. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 13, 17, 18, 27, 31, 36, 38, 42.

[k] See Lardner, Numb. 43.

St.

St. Paul to the Epheſians, and that in his time exiſted a *collection of evangelical and apoſtolical writings*;—we may alſo with probability conclude from his Epiſtle, that the *Epiſtle to the Romans*, and the *firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians*, were at that period already written.

5. *Polycarp.*

POLYCARP was an *immediate diſciple* of St. John the Apoſtle, by whom he was alſo appointed to the biſhoprick of Smyrna[l]. According to the information of Irenæus[m], he left behind him various writings. But none of them are come down to us except his epiſtle to the Philippians; and even this is no longer entire in the Greek original[n].

In

[l] See Irenæus, Lib. iii. cap. 3. §. 4. Euſebius, Lib. iii. cap. 36. p. 130. and Hieronymus De vir. illuſtr. cap. 13.

[m] In Euſebius, Lib. v. cap. 20.

[n] It ſtands in Cotelerius, vol. ii. p. 186—189; and the old Latin verſion, which contains the entire epiſtle, p. 190

In this work he teſtifies *expreſsly*, that St. Paul had written *an Epiſtle to the Philippians*, in which he ſtrengthened their faith, hope, and love towards God, Chriſt and their neighbour. "Paul," ſays he [o], "not only preached in perſon to you the true doctine, but alſo when abſent wrote epiſtles to you, by the ſtudy of which you will be able to edify yourſelves in the faith which has been delivered to you." And in another place [p] he expreſſes his aſtoniſhment at the covetouſneſs of Valens, one of their preſbyters. "But," he adds, "I have never obſerved, nor ever heard the ſame of you, among whom Paul preached. On the contrary, he

p. 190—191. Both may be ſeen in the Edit. of Frey, p. 143—161.—The teſtimonies of the above-mentioned authors, and the paſſages cited by them, place the authenticity of this epiſtle beyond all doubt.—If the fragments, which are called *Reſponſiones*, (in Coteler. l. cit. p. 205. 6. and in Frey, p. 162—164) were the genuine production of Polycarp, they might be conſidered as an evident teſtimony for the authenticity of the four Goſpels.

[o] §. iii. p. 146. 47. [p] §. ix. p. 150.

makes

makes mention of you in the beginning of his Epiſtle, and boaſts of you in all communities [q]."—He cites alſo expreſsly, although not by name, a paſſage from *St. Paul's firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians*, vi. 2. An neſcimus quia ſancti mundum judicabunt? *ſicut Paulus docet* [r].—In like manner he appeals to the command which ſtands in *the Holy Scriptures*, "Be ye angry in ſuch a manner that ye do not ſin; and let not the ſun go down upon your wrath [s]." Confido, vos bene exercitatos eſſe in *Sacris litteris.——Ut his ſcripturis* dictum eſt, *Iraſcimini et nolite peccare; et ſol non occidat ſuper*

[q] See Philipp. i. 3—5. In the former of theſe two paſſages the Plural number ſtands in the Greek, ἐν—ἐγραψεν ἐπιστολας. But it is by no means uncommon to uſe this word in the plural number, although only a ſingle epiſtle is meant. Comp. Cotelerii not. in loc.—Lardner ſuppoſes that Polycarp in this place intended not only the Epiſtle to the Philippians, but alſo both the Epiſtles of St. Paul to the Theſſalonians. Credibility, vol. ii. p. 91. 2.

[r] §. xi. p. 159. [s] §. xii. p. 159.

iracundiam

iracundiam veſtram. Now ſince the paſſage, as here quoted, does not exiſt in any part of the Old Teſtament, but is found excluſively in the Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Epheſians, iv. 26, this ſentence may therefore be conſidered as an evidence, that the *Epiſtle to the Epheſians* was already eſteemed at that time as a *divine Scripture.*

This epiſtle of Polycarp is throughout moral, and contains a variety of ethical maxims, delivered almoſt in the ſame words which we find in the Scriptures of our New Teſtament.—"Remember" ſays he[t], "what the Lord taught, Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven; be merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; with the ſame meaſure that ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again." Further, "Bleſſed are the poor, and they that are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake, for theirs is the

[t] §. ii. p. 145, 146.

kingdom of God." Paſſages of ſimilar import are found in St. Matthew, v. 3. 7. 10. vii. 1, 2. St. Luke, vi. 20. 37, 38.—"We muſt all ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, in order that every one may give an account of himſelf[u]." This alſo is found in the ſame words, Rom. xiv. 10. 12.—He warns them[w] againſt covetouſneſs with the very ſame arguments and expreſſions as are found in 1 Tim. vi. 7. 10. "The love of money is the root of all evil. Let us therefore well conſider, that as we brought nothing into the world, ſo can we carry with us nothing out."—In this work of Polycarp we meet beſides with many ſentiments in exactly the ſame dreſs in which they exiſt in the firſt Epiſtle of St. Peter; which has alſo been remarked by Euſebius[x]. That I may not be too prolix,

[u] §. vi. p. 150. [w] §. iv. p. 147.
[x] Hiſt. Eccl. Lib. XV. cap. xiv. p. 162. Πολυκαρπος

prolix, I will mention only the paſſages below [y].—From theſe paſſages alone, we cannot indeed conclude, that he has taken them from the undermentioned books of the New Teſtament [z]; but when joined with the numerous and clear evidences which will be produced in the following pages, they greatly corroborate the proof of the Authenticity of the New Teſtament.

SECT. III.

Teſtimonies from Works of the firſt Century, which are now loſt.

TO theſe evidences of the apoſtolical fathers, we are enabled to add

μαρτυς ων τη αληθειαν περι φιλανθρωπιας αυτου γραφη φερεται εις ημας, καιχρηται αυτη μαρτυριαι απο της Πετρου προτερας επιστολης.

[y] Compare §. ii. p. 144. with 1 Pet. i. 8.—§. ii. p. 145. with 1 Pet. i. 21.—§. ii. latter part, with 1 Pet. iii. 9.—And §. v. p. 149. with 1 Pet. ii. 11.

[z] See above, p. 38.

yet ſome others from the firſt century. The writings themſelves are indeed, to the great loſs of Chriſtianity, no longer extant; but the following evidences from them have been preſerved in part by Euſebius.

Papias, Biſhop of Hierapolis, was, according to Euſebius[a], a man of very moderate underſtanding, but who employed ſo much the greater care in examining into the doctrines and hiſtory of Jeſus and of his Apoſtles, from their immediate acquaintance and diſciples. He had collected conſiderable information, particularly from Ariſtion, and John the Preſbyter, [whom ſome

[a] Hiſt. Eccleſ. III. cap. xxxix. p. 135. 38. In this place, Euſebius treats amply of the hiſtory and writings of Papias. The deciſion which he makes in p. 137, σφοδρα —— σμικρος ων τον νουν, ὡς αν εκ των αυτου λογων τεκμηραμενον εστιν φαινεται, muſt not be conſidered as a contradiction of the paſſage in Lib. III. cap. xxxvi. p. 130. For the opinion which is found there, Παπιας, —— —— ανηρ τα παντα ὁτι μαλιστα λογιωτατος και της γραφης ειδεμων, is the interpolation of a Scholiaſt. See Valeſius in loc.

conceived

conceived to be the author of the Apocalypſe] which information he delivered to poſterity, under the title, λογων κυριακων εξηγησις, An Explication of the words of the Lord. But of this work nothing now remains, except the extracts which are preſerved in Euſebius.

The information, properly belonging to the New Teſtament, which was contained in that book, is given us by Euſebius [b], in the following words:—"'Mark, the interpreter of Peter, faithfully wrote what the latter had taught: 'He has not indeed placed the diſcourſes and actions of Chriſt in their 'proper chronological order; for he 'was neither a hearer of the Lord himſelf, nor one of his immediate followers; but, as I have already mentioned, became afterwards acquainted 'with Peter, who taught according to 'the wants of his hearers, but without

[b] Page 137, 138.

 'any

'any view of giving a hiſtory of our 'Lord's diſcourſes. Mark however 'committed no miſtake in writing ſome 'things as they occurred to his memory. 'For he was anxious to omit nothing 'which he had heard, and to add 'nothing falſe to his account.' "This is Papias' information concerning St. Mark. And of St. Matthew he writes, 'Matthew wrote his Goſpel in the 'Hebrew language, and every one in-'terpreted it as well as he could.' "The ſame Papias makes uſe alſo of certain evidences from the firſt Epiſtle of St. John, and the firſt Epiſtle of St. Peter. He relates likewiſe another ſtory of a woman, accuſed before the Lord of many crimes; which hiſtory is found in the Goſpel according to the Hebrews[c]."—This paſſage depoſes an irrefragable

[c] Μαρκος μεν ἑρμηνευτης Πετρου γενομενος, ὁσα, εμνημονευσεν, ακριβως ἐγραψεν, ου μεντοι ταξει τα ὑπο του Χριστου η λεχθεντα, η πραχθεντα· ουτε γαρ ἠκουσε του κυριου,

irrefragable evidence for the *Goſpels of St. Matthew and St. Mark*, the *firſt Epiſtle of St. Peter and the firſt Epiſtle of St. John.* But if St. Mathew wrote his Goſpel in Hebrew, (or as we call it, Chaldee) which hence appears to be manifeſt, yet it is equally certain from other grounds that he compoſed it likewiſe in Greek. The Chriſtians in Paleſtine uſed the Hebrew original; added to it many things taken from other goſpels, genuine and ſpurious; and this is that anciently celebrated

κυριου, ουτε παρηκολουθησεν αυτῳ· ὑστερον δε ὡς εφην Πετρῳ, ὁς προς τας χρειας εποιειτο τας διδασκαλιας, αλλ' ουχ ὡσπερ συνταξιν των Κυριακων ποιουμενος λογων· ὡστε ουδεν ἡμαρτε Μαρκος, ὑτως ενια γραψας ὡς απεμνημονευσεν· ἑνος γαρ εποιησατο προνοιαν, του μηδεν ὡν ἡκουσε παραλιπειν η ψευσασθαι τι εν αυτοις· ταυτα μεν ουν ἱστορηται τῳ Παπια περι τού Μαρκου· περι δε του Ματθαιου ταυτ' ειρηται· Ματθαιος μεν ουν Ἑβραϊδι διαλεκτῳ τα λογια συνεγραψατο· ἡρμηνευσε δ' αυτα ὡς ἠδυνατο ἑκαστος· κεκρηται δ' αυτος μαρτυριαις απο της Ιωαννου προτερας επιστολης, και της Πετρου ὁμοιως· εκτιθειται δε και αλλην ἱστοριαν περι γυναικος, επι πολλαις ἁμαρτιαις διαβληθεισης επι του κυριου, ἡν το καθ' Ἑβραιους Ευαγγελιον περιεχει.

Goſpel of the Hebrews, or as it is likewiſe named, of the Nazarines[d].

In caſe Papias had advanced in his book ſtill further evidences of a ſimilar nature, and we have reaſon to ſuppoſe that he did ſo, Euſebius would have rendered great ſervice to poſterity if he had extracted them. But it is much to be lamented that he often excerpts the old writers not ſo completely as ſcholars muſt deſire. In the Thirty-ſixth Chapter of the Third Book of his Eccl. Hiſt. (p. 133,) in which he continues his account of the Chriſtian teachers in the reign of Trajan, he ſays that many of them left their native country, and exerciſed the office of Evangeliſts, zealouſly announcing Chriſt to thoſe who had yet heard nothing of the preaching of faith, and delivering to them the ſcripture of the

[d] See Fabricii Cod. apocr. N. T. I. 355.

divine

divine Goſpels*. Euſebius, a man of an integrity univerſally acknowledged, aſſures us, that he drew his information from the documents of antiquity which he found in the library at Cæſarea. We are therefore certain, that *as early as the beginning of the ſecond century*, the *four Goſpels*, which were received in Euſebius's time, i. e. the *Goſpels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John*, were *univerſally known among the Chriſtians*; and not only eſteemed as *genuine writings of the men above-mentioned;* but alſo as of *divine inſpiration.*

CHAP. II.

Witneſſes in the Second Century.

IN the ſecond century the evidences for the Scriptures of the New Teſtament

* Και γαρ δη πλειστοι των τοτε μαθητων, σφοδροτερω φιλοσοφιας ερωτι προς τον θειον λογον την ψυχην πληττομενοι,

eternal and powerful original-beings, one good, the other bad. From the bad was derived all matter, conſequently the bodies of men, which were therefore the ſeat of every ſin. And from this principle flowed the whole of that gloomy, moroſe, melancholy ſyſtem of morals adopted by the philoſophers of the Eaſt; which placed true virtue in the rejection of all the pleaſures of ſenſe, and in the ſevere treatment, mortification, and torture of the body[f]. Theſe

[f] See—1. The information contained in Xenophon, Plato, Ariſtotle, and Diogenes Laertius Procem. vitar. philoſ. §. viii.—2. The fragments of Zoroaſter in Euſebii Præparat. evangel.—3. The doctrines of the Bramins.—4. The refutations in St. Paul.—And 5. The doctrines of the Gnoſtics and Manicheans. Compare Moſhemii Inſtit. H. E. majores, ſec. i. 136, 339. with Diſſert. de cauſis ſuppoſitorum librorum inter Chriſtian. ſec. i. et ii. vol. i. diſſert. in H. E. p. 213 ſeq. But the learned and ingenious man, who every where perceived *ſyſtems*, which his philoſophical head had created, appears abſolutely to err, when he ſuppoſes, that in the Eaſt exiſted a peculiar ſect, which had brought *all* theſe tenets into a regular ſyſtem. It is

Theſe opinions were likewiſe not uncommon among the Jews, as may be collected from the refutations of them in the New Teſtament, and from the writings of Joſephus. The Phariſees laid a great ſtreſs on Theurgy; and through the exerciſe of this viſionary art, they obtained a great part of their conſequence among the people. The Eſſenes in particular adopted the whole ſyſtem.

This oriental philoſophy inſinuated itſelf by degrees alſo among the followers of the Grecian ſyſtems. Of theſe none had been ſo generally received, as that of Plato, which was in moſt parts excellent. But it became gradually much changed and corrupted not only through ignorance, miſunderſtanding, and innovation; but alſo by being intermixed, particularly by

is more probable that there exiſted a variety of ſects, which occaſionally adopted different doctrines.

Plotinus

Plotinus of Alexandria[s] a Platonist of the third century, with the oriental ſyſtems. Thus aroſe the New-platonic philoſophy; a mixture of the platonic, but very much corrupted, and of the oriental philoſophy: and this became the principal ſource from which were derived the perverſions, mutilations, and moſt abominable corruptions of genuine Chriſtianity.

For until the ſecond century, the Chriſtians always perſiſted in the ſound expoſition of the New Teſtament. To this period they continued free, if we except the joyleſs morality of the Eſſenes, from the diſtractions of pſeudo-philoſophy;

[s] Plotinus, a diſciple of Ammonius Saccas, travelled into Perſia, purpoſely to learn the doctrines of the Indians and Perſians. He was the maſter of the celebrated philoſopher and enemy of Chriſtianity, Porphyry; who alſo edited his works. Moſheim too much indulges his wit here alſo, as has been remarked and proved by Semler, Walch, and others. Prof. Meiners has treated this ſubject very amply in his 'Conſiderations on the New-Platonic Philoſophy.' Leipſig, 1782, 8vo.

philoſophy; and maintained among themſelves genuine apoſtolical Chriſtianity. But ſcarcely had ſome of the ſcholars of the heathen world (for inſtance Clement of Alexandria) acknowledged Chriſtianity, when the pſeudo-philoſophy of the Eaſterns and New-platoniſts, broke in like a rapid torrent, and left behind univerſal deſolation. Until this time the doctrines of the Chriſtian religion had been preached without exception, and with the greateſt publicity to all who would hear them, and, as the founder of Chriſtianity expreſſed himſelf in his charge to the Apoſtles[h], "from the houſe tops." But now, in reſemblance of the heathen myſteries, certain ceremonies and doctrines began to be concealed, and thus Chriſtianity aſſumed its myſteries as well as heatheniſm. Beſides, a variety of heathen ceremonies were adopted in the divine ſervice, and

[h] Matthew x.

hence

hence Chriſtianity became gradually a ceremonial religion. Since Origen (in the third century) this ſyſtem of religion, which commands in a particular manner the ſtricteſt adherence to truth, was perverted ſo much, that it was declared a duty of charity to forge miracles, and in ſhort, every thing elſe, if by theſe means converts might be made to their religion; nay, this was carried to ſuch a pitch of ſhameleſs effrontery, that theſe infamous forgeries were named, pious deceits, piæ fraudes. The zealous ſupporters of the new-platonic philoſophy intermixed their ſyſtem, even that part of it which is called platonic love, with Chriſtianity. Socrates and Plato defended the moſt intimate union of men with beautiful boys, in ſuch a manner, that they made a diſtinction between corporeal and ſpiritual love; and aſſerted, that the wiſe man feels only the latter in reſpect to the beauty of the boy,

boy, in order to conduct him to virtue. Hence aroſe in the third century that moſt infamous cuſtom for perſons of the oppoſite ſexes, without being united in the bonds of marriage, to live with one another in the cloſeſt intimacy; in order, as they pretended, to eſtabliſh a mere union of ſouls for the purpoſes of virtue. But the moſt injurious effects, and the almoſt mortal blow which Chriſtianity received from that pſeudo-philoſophy of the eaſterns, and more eſpecially of the new-platoniſts, was the utter neglect, mutilation, and ſubverſion of morals; together with the myſtical mode of interpreting the New Teſtament. The ſimple and perſpicuous ſyſtem of morality which Chriſtianity taught, was too light for theſe pretended philoſophers; it afforded too little matter for their fancies and ſpeculations. It became therefore neglected, and ſince the third century the whole importance

was made to conſiſt in the theory of Chriſtianity, or rather, of the oriental-platonic Chriſtianity. But the matter did not reſt even here; the religion became burthened with the above mentioned theurgy, and corporeal mortification; and through the aſſiſtance of myſtical and ridiculous interpretations, every error and every impurity which the paſſions or caprice of men defired, were introduced into the New Teſtament. In this manner that eaſy, beautiful, immediately and univerſally active, chearful, and philanthropic religious-ſyſtem of the New Teſtament, became during the ſecond and more particularly the third century, a gloomy, harſh, miſanthropic ſyſtem of whims, fancies, monkery, deceit, and hierarchical tyranny.

To theſe dreadful calamities from within were added alſo from without inceſſant perſecutions, which were often general, and ſometimes extremely bloody

bloody and cruel. Even the worthy Trajan, and yet the more excellent Marcus Antoninus, tortured and put to death many of their moſt faithful ſubjects only becauſe they were not idolaters, but choſe to live according to thoſe laws of Chriſtianity, which even the heathens themſelves acknowledged to be irreproachable and excellent[1]. But the moſt horrible of all theſe perſecutions began to rage againſt the Chriſtians about the year 249. The Emperor Decius proceeded ſo far as to attempt to exterminate Chriſtianity by the roots. By his orders the Chriſtians were not only put to death, but were alſo afflicted with the moſt exquiſite tortures. A Chriſtian, for inſtance, had his whole body ſmeared with honey, and then, his hands tied behind his back, expoſed quite naked to the meridian ſun, where myriads of inſects

[1] Let the reader conſult, for inſtance, Plinii Epiſt. 97. Lib. x.

aſſailed him, and conſumed his body by inſenſible degrees [k].

Nevertheleſs, this religion was continually extending itſelf in all the parts of the then known world. In Gaul there already exiſted flouriſhing communities at Lyons and Vienne; in Germany; in Britain; in Africa, and every where the number of the Chriſtians ſo increaſed, that even in the beginning of the ſecond century the heathens complained that the temples of the gods were quite deſerted; and towards the end of the third, the court and army of the heathen Emperours were filled with perſons of this perſuaſion. —This extenſive propagation of Chriſtianity was undoubtedly the conſequence of the continually increaſing promulgation of the Scriptures of the New Teſtament. As early as the beginning of the ſecond century were

[k] See Schroeckh's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſt. IV. 190. of the original.

made

made Latin and Syriac verſions. Learned men, (particularly Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and his ſcholar Pierius), were anxious to have accurate tranſcripts of the original; and opulent men, (eſpecially Pamphilus), cauſed at a great expence many exact copies of it to be taken and diſperſed [l].—We will now hear the individual witneſſes themſelves.

1. *Juſtin Martyr.*

JUSTIN, ſurnamed the Martyr, before his converſion to the Chriſtian faith, had carefully ſtudied the Stoic, Peripatetic, Pythagorean, and Platonic ſyſtems of philoſophy; and muſt therefore be conſidered, on account of his learning and antiquity, as a witneſs of the greateſt importance [m]. It is neceſſary

[l] See Prof. Schroeckh's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſt. Part i.—iv. and C. R. Walch, On the uſe of the Holy Scripture among the ancient Chriſtians—Leipzig, 1779, 8vo.

[m] Concerning the circumſtances of his life, principles,

ceſſary to read only his 'Addreſs to the Gentiles,' (λογος προς Ἑλληνας, pag. 1—3), 'The Exhortation to the Gentiles,' (λογος παραινετικος προς Ἑλληνας, p. 6—36), and the work 'On the only God,' (περι μοναρχιας, p. 36—42), in order to be convinced of his extenſive reading in the beſt writings of antiquity. Theſe works of Juſtin prove inconteſtibly that the firſt followers of Chriſtianity were not by any means ſuch as its enemies aſſert, univerſally

and writings, the moſt accurate and ample information is to be found in the Preface to the Benedictine Edit. of his works, Haag, 1742, fol. Beſides the genuine and ſpurious works of Juſtin, this edition contains alſo—Tatian's Oration againſt the Gentiles, p. 241—276.—Athenagoras's Apology for the Chriſtians, p. 277—313.—And, his Treatiſe on the Reſurrection of the Dead, p. 314—336.—The three books of Theophilus of Antioch to Autolycus, p. 337—400.—The Satire of Hermas on the Heathen Philoſophers, p. 401—406.—And the fragments of the loſt writings of Juſtin, Tatian, and Athenagoras; together with the Acts of the Martyrdom of Juſtin, p. 585 and fol.—His firſt Apology is a well written defence of the Chriſtians againſt the calumniations of the Gentiles.

unlearned and ſimple men. Juſtin was much better acquainted with the works and opinions of Plato, Ariſtotle, and Pythagoras, and with the writings of Orpheus, Homer, Æſchylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, than moſt of thoſe who are pleaſed to aſſert that the heathen authors are the only ſources of all wiſdom, but the followers of Jeſus univerſally mean and ſimple men.

Beſides the *Revelation of St. John* [n], Juſtin has not quoted in any part of his works from a ſingle writer of the

[n] Dialogus cum Tryphone, cap. lxxxi. page 179. Και παρ' ἡμιν ανηρ τις, ᾧ ονομα Ιωαννης, εἰς των αποστολων του Χριστου, εν Αποκαλυψει γενομενη αυτῳ, Χιλια ετη ποιησειν εν Ιερουσαλημ τους της ἡμετερης Χριστῳ πιστευσαντας προυφητευσε, και μετα ταυτα την καθολικην και — — αιωνιαν ὁμοθυμαδον ἁπαντων ανασταση γενησεσθαι και κρισιν· 'A man from among us, whoſe name was John, and an Apoſtle of Chriſt, has propheſied in his Revelation, that they who believe in our Chriſt, ſhall live a thouſand years in Jeruſalem; and after that ſhall follow the univerſal and eternal reſurrection and judgment.'

New Teſtament *by name.* But he appeals often and expreſsly to the Goſpels, which were compoſed by the Apoſtles and their aſſiſtants, as to thoſe books from which the Chriſtians derived their tenets.—In his firſt apology (preſented to the Emperour Antoninus the Pious) he gives this reaſon for the celebration of the Lord's Supper among the Chriſtians[o]: "for the Apoſtles in the memoirs which are named Goſpels, have thus aſſured us, that Jeſus ordered them to do it; That he took bread, gave thanks, and

[o] Apolog I. cap. lxvi. page 83.—See alſo Dialog. cum Tryphone Judæo, cap. ciii. p. 199. Εν τοις απομνημονευμασι των αποστολων γεγραπται, προσελθων (namely σατανας) αυτω (Chriſt) και πειραζων μεχρι του ειπειν αυτω, προσκυνησον μοι, και αποκριναθαι αυτω τον Χριστον, ὑπαγε οπισω μου σατανα· Κυριον τον Θεον σου προσκυνησεις και αυτω μονω λατρευσεις.—And in the ſame place: Εν τοις απομνημονευμασι ἁ φημι ὑπο των αποστολων αυτου και των εκεινοις παρακολουθησαντων συντεταχθαι, ὁτι ἱδρως ὡσει θρομβοι κατεχειτο, αυτου ευχομενου και λεγοντος, παρελθετω, ει δυνατον, το πατημα τουτο·

then

then ſaid, This do in remembrance of me: This is my body: That in like manner he took the cup, and after he had given thanks, ſaid, This is my blood." And in his advice concerning the behaviour of the Chriſtians at their Sunday meetings, he mentions even, "that the memoirs of the Apoſtles, or the writings of the Prophets, are publicly read; and when the reader has ended, the preſident of the community exhorts them to the imitation of ſuch excellent things[p]." An evident proof, that *as early as the beginning of the ſecond century* the Goſpels were not only generally known among the Chriſtians, but were revered, even as the Scriptures of the

[p] Apologia I. cap. lxvii. p. 83. Και τῃ του ἡλιου λεγομενῃ ἡμερᾳ, παντων κατα πολεις ἡ αγρους μενοντων επι το αυτο συνελευσις γινεται, και τα απομνημονευματα των αποστολων, ἡ τα συγγραμματα των προφητων αναγινωσκεται μεχρις ἐγχωρει· ειτα παυσαμενου του αναγινωσκοντος, ὁ προεστως δια λογου την νουθεσιαν και προκλησιν της των καλων τουτων μιμησεως ποιειται.

Old

Old Teſtament, that is, as *divine books.*

The view with which Juſtin compoſed his works did not allow him to uſe the Scriptures of the New Teſtament by way of proof. We find, nevertheleſs, where opportunities occur, a variety of paſſages, and theſe quoted with the addition that they were to be found in the *Chriſtian Scriptures.* Thus, in the 'Firſt Apology,' in which he ſpeaks of the excellent laws of Jeſus, and the virtuous actions of the Chriſtians [q], of their hope of a future reſurrection [r], and of their cuſtomary mode of Baptiſm and of Supper of the Lord [s],—and likewiſe in the 'Dialogue with Trypho', when he treats of the prophecies which Jeſus had pronounced [t], of John

[q] Apolog. I. cap. xv—xvii. p. 52—54.
[r] Apolog. I. cap. xix. p. 55.
[s] Apolog. I. cap. lxi—lxvii. p. 79—84.
[t] Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. xxxv. p. 132. cap. lxxvi. p. 137. cap. cvii. p. 201.

the

the Baptiſt[u], of the morality which Jeſus taught[w], of Mary the mother of Jeſus[x], and of the inſults offered to the dying Saviour[y],—many paſſages are quoted from St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, *word for word.* And the whole 'Dialogue with Trypho' is, in particular, a repetition of the hiſtory of the life of Jeſus, as it appears at preſent in our Goſpels. In this work Juſtin compares the circumſtances in the life of Jeſus with the characters attributed to the Meſſiah in the Old Teſtament, and concludes, from their having been exactly fulfilled in him, that he was the Meſſiah promiſed by God.

[u] Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. xlix. p. 145. cap. li. p. 147. cap. lxxxviii. p. 186.

[w] Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. xciii. p. 190.

[x] Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. c. p. 196.

[y] Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. ci. p. 196.

2. *Tatian.*

2. *Tatian.*

TATIAN, the father of the Encratites, ſhews himſelf in his 'Oration againſt the Gentiles[z]', to have been a man, who, from his travels, had become intimately acquainted with the world; and from reading, familiar with the beſt writers and with the hiſtory of the Gentiles. In this Oration he informs the Gentiles how little reaſon they had to boaſt of their philoſophers and of their wiſdom; and preſſes them with very pointed reproofs drawn from their own writings, laws, actions, and manners. In a work of this kind we can eaſily ſuppoſe, that the author had no opportunity of quoting the Scriptures of the New Teſtament; and we therefore find, in *two paſſages* ex-

[z] See above, p. 101, note [m].—The Preface there noticed, gives ample information concerning his life, writings, and opinions.

cepted,

cepted [a], that they are never once mentioned.—But this witneſs had depoſed ſo much the more in favour of their authenticity in his other writings, which are now loſt, except a few fragments preſerved by different authors. —I ſhall produce him again, at the concluſion of this century, among the remaining witneſſes, whoſe teſtimonies are known to us only through the information of others.

3. *Irenæus.*

IRENÆUS, Biſhop of Lyons, had not only lived very near the times of the Apoſtles, but had enjoyed familiar intercourſe with one of their imme-

[a] Cap. xiii. p. 255. and cap. xix. p. 261. In the firſt paſſage he aſſerts, that the ſoul is καθ' ἑαυτην σκοτος, και ουδεν εν αυτη φοτεινον; (how this is to be underſtood is explained by the editor, in the Preface, Part. II. cap. xi. §. iii. p. 49.—51.)—and then adds, και τουτο εστιν αρα το ειρημενον· ἡ σκοτια το φως ου καταλαμβανει (John i. 5).—In the other paſſage he quotes John i. 3. with theſe words, παντα ὑπ' αυτου, και χωρις αυτου γεγονεν ουδε ἑν.

diate

diate diſciples and friends[b]. In his five books Againſt Hereſies, he delivers very ample and clear teſtimonies for the hiſtorical truth of the Scriptures of the New Teſtament.—He quotes *all the Evangeliſts* often, and *by name*; relates the cauſe and deſign of their writings; and declares that there were *only four* Goſpels, viz. thoſe of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, which were accounted genuine and divine books[c]. In

[b] In the above-mentioned edition of his Works by Maſſuet, very copious information is given concerning his life, opinions, and writings, in the prefixed Diſſertationes præv. ad Irenæum.—He left many works, which are named by Euſebius and Jerom. But of theſe, if we except a few fragments, nothing is now remaining beſides his Libri quinque adverſus hæreſes. Even theſe have not come down to us in the Greek original, but are extant only in an ancient Latin verſion.—The authenticity of this work has been amply proved by C. R. Walch; ſee Röſler's Eccleſiaſtical Fathers, v. 264—270.

[c] The moſt particular paſſages are, Lib. III. cap. i. p. 174. and cap. ii. p. 190—192. That he makes uſe

In oppoſition to the Valentinians, he proves by many paſſages from the Goſpels of St. Matthew[d], St. Mark[e], St. Luke[f], and St. John[g], and alſo from the Acts of the Apoſtles by St. Luke[h], that there is but one God the creator and preſerver of all things.—To the writings of St. Paul he appeals yet more frequently. He proves his tenets againſt the heretics moſt commonly from St. Paul's Epiſtle to the Romans, the two Epiſtles to the Corinthians, the Epiſtles to the Galatians, Epheſians, Philippians, and Coloſſians, the two Epiſtles to the Theſſalonians, thoſe

uſe of ſuch ſtrange arguments, from the four winds, &c. by way of proof, is of no conſequence to us in the preſent inquiry. It is ſufficient, that he expreſsly aſſerts that in his time *no other* Goſpels, but the *four above-mentioned*, were received among Chriſtians.

[d] L. cit. cap. ix. p. 184, 185.

[e] L. cit. cap. x. p. 185—88.

[f] Ibid.

[g] L. cit. cap. xi. p. 188—90.

[h] L. cit. cap. xii. p. 193—98.

to

to Timothy, and the Epiſtle to Titus. He aſſerts in many places that theſe *twelve Epiſtles* were the *genuine* and *divine works* of *St. Paul*[1]; makes numerous and ſometimes long extracts from them, evidently proving to every reader, that they are the very ſame which we at this time poſſeſs in the New Teſtament[k]. In like manner he teſtifies alſo the authenticity of the *firſt Epiſtle of St. Peter*[l]; the *firſt and ſecond Epiſtles of St. John*[m]; and the *Revelation of the ſame Apoſtle*[n].

He

[1] For, in his quotations he makes uſe of the following phraſes:—'Paul has this in his Epiſtle to the Romans,' Lib. III. cap. xvi. p. 205.—'Paul ſhews this in his firſt—or—ſecond Epiſtle to the Corinthians,' Lib. III. cap. vii. p. 182. Lib. IV. cap. xxvii. p. 264. He uſes theſe or ſimilar forms of quotation for every one of the above mentioned epiſtles.

[k] Lardner has collected proofs thereof in his 'Credibility of the G. H.' vol. ii. p. 157—169.

[l] He quotes this epiſtle alſo, with the ſame introductory phraſe—'Peter ſays in his epiſtle.'—Lib. IV. cap. ix. p. 238.

[m] See Lib. III. cap. xvi. p. 206, and ibid. p. 207.

[n] See particularly, Lib. V. cap. xxvi.—finem libri,

p. 323

He aſſerts that theſe writings were divine, and the ſure foundation of the Chriſtian faith[o]. What his opinion of the other books of the New Teſtament was, we cannot, from his ſilence, determine. He appears to have conſidered the Epiſtle to the Hebrews as neither the work of St. Paul, nor a divine book[p].—This is a proof, that the firſt Chriſtians were not ſo credulous as modern infidels repreſent them. Had they received all at random, without examination, then certainly they would not have rejected ſo univerſally the apocryphal writings, and heſitated to acknowledge the authenticity of ſome of the books of the New Teſtament.

p. 323—337, where he proves the Deſtruction of the Roman Monarchy, the Wickedneſs of Antichriſt, and the millenniary kingdom about to take place before the univerſal judgment, from the Revelation of St. John.

[o] See Lib. III. cap. i. p. 174. Lib. II. cap. xviii. p. 156.

[p] See Lardner's Credibility of the G. H. vol. ii. p. 364—166.

In his time collections[q] of the evangelical and apoſtolical writings were already in the hands of many Chriſtians. They were diligently ſtudied; and in order that thoſe who were not opulent might not be deceived by any corrupted copies, he adviſed them to apply to the teachers of the church.—"All the divine ſcriptures," ſays he[r]; "both prophecies and goſpels are open and clear, and may be conſulted by all."—And in another place[s], "That man will eaſily convince himſelf of this,

[q] See Lib. I. cap. iii. p. 17. and Lardner, l. cit. p. 170, 171.

[r] Lib. II. cap. xxvii. p. 155.

[s] Lib. IV. cap. xxxii. p. 270. From the firſt view it would appear to follow from this paſſage, that the copies of the ſacred books were at that time excluſively in the hands of the teachers. In fact it aſſerts only thus much, that they poſſeſſed the copies *moſt to be depended on*; for the paſſage referred to in the note immediately preceding, together with many other reaſons, will not permit us to doubt, that the generality of Chriſtians alſo, poſſeſſed them in abundance. See Walch On the Uſe of the Holy Scriptures.

(viz.

(viz. that the Old and New Teſtaments came from one and the ſame God) who diligently ſtudies the divine ſcriptures which are in the poſſeſſion of the preſbyters of the church."

Beſides the evangelical and apoſtolical works above mentioned, Irenæus acknowledges no other to be *divine*. He appeals indeed often, and with high panegyric, to the writings of Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Papias, Hermas, and Juſtin Martyr, but he never betrays any ſuch veneration for them, as he ſhews for the writings of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles[t].

Here then we have an extraordinarily important evidence for the hiſtorical truth of the greateſt part of the books of the New Teſtament:—it is the evidence of a man who lived ſo near the times of the Apoſtles, who

[t] See Lardner, Credibility, vol. ii. p. 173—178; who has examined with much ſolidity the paſſages in which theſe writings are quoted.

had enjoyed an intimate intercourſe with one of their immediate diſciples; and was therefore as capable of inveſtigating accurately the truth of thoſe writings, as we are of proving the hiſtorical truth of a work attributed to Grotius or Selden:—it is the evidence of a man who was well read in all the works reſpecting Chriſtianity, both of the orthodox and heretics; who *himſelf* doubted of the truth of ſome books of the New Teſtament, and conſequently muſt be conſidered in this point as totally exempt from credulity.—This witneſs, thus qualified, appeals in the face of heretics to thoſe writings, as to works *which deſcended inconteſtibly from the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts*. We ſhould, undoubtedly, without heſitation pronounce every other book, reſting only on a ſingle evidence of ſuch weight, to be genuine. Why then ſhould not the teſtimony of this witneſs have its full force

force on the Scriptures of the New Teſtament?

4. *Athenagoras.*

ATHENAGORAS, a philoſopher and a native of Athens, is the moſt poliſhed and elegant author of Chriſtian antiquity; and in reſpect of ſtyle, excels even Origen. His two works, the Apology or Petition for the Chriſtians, (πρεσβεια περι Χριστιανων), and a Treatiſe on the Reſurrection of the Dead, (περι αναστασεως των νεκρων), are written in very pure Greek, and with much wit and eloquence.—In the Apology, which he preſented to the Emperour Marcus Antoninus [u], he defended the Chriſtians from the three crimes with which they were falſely accuſed, viz. atheiſm, inceſt, and an-

[u] This is proved, in oppoſition to Bayle, in the Preface to the above mentioned (page 191. note m.) edition of the works of Juſtin, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus of Antioch, p. cxiii.

thropophagy. He ſhews, that it is evidently abſurd to accuſe of atheiſm, thoſe who reſtore to the Divinity the honours and adoration of which he had been robbed by idols; or of inceſt thoſe who aſſert that even to look on a woman to luſt after her is fornication: or of anthropophagy thoſe who never frequent the gladiatorial ſhews, who declare that the uſe of medicines tending to procure abortion is homicide, and that the expoſing of children is infanticide. The whole book cannot be read but with pleaſure. Every part clearly evinces that the author had accurately ſtudied the beſt works of the Grecians, and was maſter of the ſtyle and courtly language proper in addreſſes to the great.—He compoſed the treatiſe On the Reſurrection of the Dead, with a view to defend the truth of the Chriſtian doctrine of the reſurrection of the body, againſt the heathen philoſophers.

He

He proves, that ſuch a reſurrection is by no means impoſſible, and ſo little improbable, that even the mere conſideration of the nature of man, and of the juſtice of God, muſt lead us to acknowledge it.

This view which Athenagoras had propoſed to himſelf in his writings, did not allow him to cite paſſages from the ſacred ſcriptures. On this account we diſcover in them (if we except a few paſſages, in which he expreſſes his propoſitions in the ſame words as we find in the books of the New Teſtament[w]), only *one* ſingle clear teſtimony, and this indeed for the authenticity of the *firſt Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.* Since the paſſage is too long, I will only extract the parts which my preſent purpoſe requires. In the treatiſe On

[w] They are collected by Lardner, Credibility of the G. H. vol. ii. p. 182—186.

the Reſurrection of the Dead[x], he avails himſelf of the proof taken from the fortunes of men in general, and particularly of the virtuous, in this life. 'The juſtice of God,' he infers, 'rendering it neceſſary to reward men as men, that is, as beings which conſiſt not only of a ſoul, but alſo of a body, accurately according to their actions; and this reward rarely occurring in the preſent life; it is therefore manifeſt that, according to the *aſſertion of the Apoſtle*, "this corruptible and earthly muſt put on incorruption,——that every one may receive juſtly according to what he has done in the body, whether it be good or bad[y]."

And,

[x] Cap. xviii—finem libri, p. 330—336.

[y] Ευδηλον, ὡς ——— ἐπὶ δὲ κατὰ τὸν ἀποστολον τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο καὶ θνητὸν ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσιαν, ἵνα ——ἕκαστος κομίσηται δικαίως, ἃ διὰ του σωματος ἐπραξεν, εἴτε ἀγαθα, εἴτε κακα. Cap. xviii. p. 331. The ſimilitude of this paſſage to St. Paul's aſſertions, 1 Cor. xv. 53. 2 Cor. v. 10, is very remarkable:

δι-

And, in chap. xix. p. 332, he had evidently the paſſage of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 32, in his mind: 'If no future judgment be held on the actions of men, men are nothing better than beaſts. Nay, they are more miſerable than other animals who ſtruggle with their paſſions, and ſtrive after righteouſneſs, and the fear of God, or other virtues. If there be no judgment, then the wild, beſtial life is the beſt; then virtue is folly, and the fear of puniſhment ridiculous; then the enjoyment of every pleaſure is the higheſt good, and that principle ſo pleaſant to the votaries of luxury and luſt, Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die, the firſt rule of life.'—Since he here appeals *expreſsly to an Apoſtle*, who had promulgated the doctrine of the reſurrection of the body, yet without

διὶ γαρ το φθαρτον τουτο ἐνδυσασθαι ἀφθαρσιαν,—ἱνα παντωτε ἐκαστος τω ἰδιω του σωματος, πρὸς ἃ ἐπραξεν, εἰτε ἀγαθον, εἰτε κακον.

mentioning

mentioning either his name or his writings; and adopts in his proof the ſame ſentiments which we ſtill find in the writings of that Apoſtle: we ſhall not certainly preſume too far, if we thence conclude—that at the *time of Athenagoras*, the *two Epiſtles of St. Paul to the Corinthians* were *generally known among the Chriſtians*, and conſidered as the *ſource of their faith.*

5. *Theophilus of Antioch.*

THEOPHILUS, Biſhop of Antioch[a], conſidering the object which he had in view, could only mention the ſacred ſcriptures occaſionally. In his 'Three Books to Autolycus,' he diſputes with a heathen, whom he wiſhed to prepare for a nearer examination of the Chriſtian religion, by firſt refuting the accuſations which had been

[a] For an account of this writer, ſee the Preface to the above mentioned Edition, p. cxx.

thrown

thrown out, that the tenets of the Chriſtians were abſurd, and their conduct deteſtable for inceſt and anthropophagy. Notwithſtanding this, we find the *Goſpels of St. Matthew and St. John, the Epiſtle to the Romans,* and *the firſt to Timothy,* quoted under the title of *Divine Scriptures.*—In the Third Book, chap. xiii. p. 388, are recited various precepts of the Old Teſtament, which inculcate chaſtity and other virtues; he then adds[a], 'But the evangelical voice teaches chaſtity in yet greater perfection, when it ſays, "Whoſoever looketh on another man's wife to luſt after her, has already committed adultery in his heart." And it ſays further, "Whoſoever marries one that is divorced, committeth adultery; and whoſoever putteth away his wife, except on account of inchaſtity,

[a] Ἡ δὲ ευαγγελιος φωνη επιτατικωτερον διδασκει περι ἁγνειας λεγουσα.

committeth

committeth adultery[b]."—In the ſame book, chap. xiv. p. 389, 'But the Goſpel ſays[c], "Love your enemies, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you. For if you only love them that love you, what merit have you? Even robbers alſo, and tax-gatherers do this."—In the Second Book, chap. xxii. p. 365, he quotes the paſſage in 1 John i. 1. 3 with the following introduction: 'This is taught us by the holy ſcriptures, and by all thoſe conducted by the Spirit, among whom John ſays[d],' &c.—With the title of the 'Divine Doctrines,' he quotes paſſages from Rom. xiii. 7, 8, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2[e].—And in the Third Book, chap. xii. p. 388, he ſays 'the commands of the prophets and evangelical writers are throughout concor-

[b] See St. Mat. v. 28. 32.

[c] Το δε Ευαγγελιον λεγει.

[d] Ὅθεν διδασκουσιν ἡμας αἱ ἁγιαι γραφαι και παντες πνευματοφοροι, ἐξ ὧν Ιωαννης λεγει.

[e] Lib. III. Cap. xiv. p. 389. Ετι —— κελευει ἡμας ὁ θειος λογος.

dant, becauſe they have *all* ſpoken as inſpired by the *very ſame* ſpirit of God [f].'

We may apply to this author our previous obſervations on Juſtin Martyr, Tatian, and Athenagoras. Frequent quotations from the writings of Homer, Heſiod, Plato, Euripides, Aratus, &c. diſcovered that Theophilus was likewiſe a man of learning and cultivated talents.

6. *Clement of Alexandria.*

CLEMENT, who was a teacher and preſbyter at Alexandria, deſerves even on this account the eſteem of poſterity—under his inſtruction was formed Origen, the moſt learned of all the fathers of the church. In his writings which are yet preſerved [g], he quotes *all*

[f] Διὰ τὸ τοὺς πάντας πνευματοφόρους ἐν πνεύματι Θεοῦ λελαληκέναι.

[g] Namely,—in the *Cohortatio ad gentes*, p. 1—95.—in the *Pædagogus*, p. 96—314.—in the eight books, named

all the books of the New Teſtament (except the *ſecond Epiſtle of St. Peter, the ſecond and third Epiſtles of St. John*, the *Epiſtle of St. James*, and the *Epiſtle to Philemon*), ſo often by name, and ſo amply, that were I to extract all the citations, they would fill a volume [h].—To obtain a fundamental knowledge of the Chriſtian religion this author had travelled into Greece, Italy, Egypt, and Aſia [i]; he

named *Stromata*, (that is, Various Diſcourſes), p. 934.—and in the diſſertation, *Quis dives ſalvetur?* p. 935—961. of the Edition of Biſhop Potter, Oxford 715. fol. See Le Nourry Adparatus ad Bibliothecam maximam patrum, tom. i. p. 624. ſeq. where the reader will meet with the moſt ample information concerning the writings of the Alexandrian Clement. Even in theſe works we find very evident proofs of the great injury which Chriſtianity has ſuffered from its connection with the new-platonic philoſophy. See above, p. 95.

[h] Lardner has collected ſome examples on every book; Credibility of the G. H. vol. ii. p. 210—330.

[i] In the Stromata, Lib. i. p. 322. he ſays that his book was a ſhort ſketch of the diſcourſes which he held with conſiderable perſons in the above-mentioned countries.

was

was well acquainted with the writings of the earlier Chriſtian teachers, Barnabas, Hermas, Clement, &c.[k]; he had examined the apocryphal books which then exiſted among the Chriſtians, and compared them with the genuine works of the ſacred writers[l].—All theſe circumſtances evince that he did not give his aſſent to the holy ſcriptures until he had accurately

[k] He cites them often, and with great eſteem; but he never pronounces them to be *divine* Scriptures, as has been ſhewn by Lardner, l. cit. p. 231—234.

[l] He frequently quotes paſſages from the Goſpel according to the Hebrews; the Goſpel according to the Egyptians; the Preaching of Peter; the Revelation of Peter; the Traditions of Matthias. But he diſtinguiſhes them clearly enough from the *genuine* writings of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles. See Lardner l. cit. p. 234—242.—And even if we ſhould grant that he conſidered the writings of Barnabas, Hermas, and Clement of Rome, and the Sybilline verſes to be *divine*, yet this would not tend to invalidate the proof for the divinity of the Scriptures of the New Teſtament. For we uſe the teſtimonies of the eccleſiaſtical Fathers not in order to prove, that theſe Scriptures are *of divine original*; but, that they are *genuine* writings of the *Evangeliſts and Apoſtles*.

examined

examined them; and therefore afford conſiderable weight to his evidence for their authenticity.

7. *Tertullian.*

TERTULLIAN, a preſbyter at Carthage, is the moſt ancient of all the Latin fathers whoſe works are now extant. His melancholy turn of mind, and the evil cuſtoms which began to prevail among Chriſtians, induced him to embrace the fanatical doctrines of the Montaniſts. But his Montaniſm can by no means weaken his evidence for the hiſtorical truth of the New Teſtament; unleſs we conceive that a fanatic muſt neceſſarily loſe all his organs of ſenſe. Generally ſpeaking, his tenets have no farther influence on his writings, than to occaſion his preaching a too ſevere ſyſtem of morality; and to ſhew that he revered Montanus and his propheteſſes Priſcilla and Maximilla as inſpired perſons,

ſons, through whom the ſpirit of God had ſpoken.—We have a great variety of his writings which diſplay much ſacred and prophane learning. But his ſtyle is extremely tedious, obſcure, replete with Latin words of his own formation, entirely inharmonious, and not rarely bombaſtic. Cave aſſerts, in oppoſition to Lactantius[m], that "it is lofty and maſculine, and carries a kind of majeſtic eloquence along with it, that gives a pleaſant reliſh to the judicious and inquiſitive reader." But the deciſions of this author on ſtyle and eloquence are as injudicious, as his hiſtorical information is unqueſtionable. That Tertullian was a man of talents, and well read in the claſſic works of antiquity, is undoubted[n]. But he had read, like many grammarians and modern editors, with the aid of

[m] Hiſtor. literar. Scriptor. eccleſiaſticor.

[n] I quote here the edition of his works by Nicolaus Rigaltius, Paris, 1641. fol.

the memory alone, but without taſte or underſtanding. Lactantius is of the ſame opinion, "Tertullianus fuit omni genere literarum peritus, ſed in eloquendo parum facilis et minus comptus, et multum obſcurus fuit."

His works are filled with quotations *by name*, and long extracts from the writings of the New Teſtament.—In the Apology for the Chriſtians, which he delivered to the heathen magiſtracy at Carthage, he appeals, among other things, to the ſtrict obedience and reverence of the Chriſtians towards the Roman Emperours. "How can you ſuppoſe," ſays he [a], "that we have no regard for the welfare of the Emperours? Behold only the word of God, our Scriptures, which we by no means keep ſecret, but which are even in the hands of our enemies. Theſe command us——to pray even for our enemies.——The following precept

[a] Apologeticus, p. 30.

alſo

alſo is found there expreſsly, Pray for kings, princes, and powers, that all things may proceed peaceably with you."—Againſt Praxeas he quotes his proofs principally, as he expreſſes himſelf, from the *New Teſtament*, from the Goſpels, and Apoſtles. "If I ſhould not ſettle this diſpute from the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, I will take my proofs from the *New Teſtament*. For I perceive both in the *Goſpels* and the *Apoſtles*, that God is as well viſible as inviſible[p]."—He mentions a Latin tranſlation of thoſe writings, but which did not always accurately expreſs the meaning of the original text[q].—He treats copiouſly of the four Goſpels, of St. Matthew, of St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, in a work againſt Marcion[r]; and proves

[p] Adverſus Praxeam, p. 646.—de *Novo Teſtamento* ſumam confirmationem——In *Evangeliis* et in *Apoſtolis* viſibilem et inviſibilem Deum deprehendo.

[q] De Monogamia, p. 684.

[r] Adverſus Marcionem, Lib. iv. p. 502, 503.

their authenticity from numerous and credible evidences ſince the times of the Apoſtles. He quotes, *by name, every ſingle book* (the Epiſtle of St. James, the ſecond Epiſtle of St. Peter, and the ſecond and third Epiſtles of St. John, alone excepted) with the title of *divine ſcriptures*, and ſo often, that, to prove it in this place by extracts from his works[a], would be perfectly ſuperfluous. I will mention only a ſingle paſſage more, which will ſerve to ſhew how cautiouſly men acted at that time in examining the genuine apoſtolical writings. In his work Againſt Hereſies, De præſcriptione hæretico-

[a] The reader will find examples in Lardner's Credibility of the G. H. vol. ii. p. 256—277.—Or, the truth of the aſſertion may be ſeen ſtill more clearly from the liſt of ſcriptural paſſages quoted by Tertullian, which is contained in the above-mentioned edition, p. 766—795.—And we cannot diſcover the leaſt trace that he had received any other book as *divine*, or as a *genuine* writing of the *Evangeliſts and Apoſtles*. See Lardner, p. 284, 285.

rum,

rum[1], he ſpeaks with great confidence of the authenticity of the apoſtolical writings which were adopted as ſuch by orthodox Chriſtians. He appeals to the evidence of communities which the Apoſtles had perſonally eſtabliſhed, at Corinth, at Philippi, at Theſſalonica, at Epheſus, and at Rome; whoſe members, on account of their intimate intercourſe with the Apoſtles, could aſſert with the greateſt degree of certainty what writings actually emanated from them. "Age jam, qui voles curioſitatem melius exercere in negotio ſalutis tuæ, percurre eccleſias *apoſtolicas*, apud quas ipſæ adhuc cathedræ apoſtolorum ſuis locis præſident; apud quas ipſæ authenticæ literæ eorum (their genuine works) recitantur.——Proxima eſt tibi Achaia? habes Corinthum. Si non longe es a Macedonia; habes Philippos, habes

[1] Cap. xxxvi. p. 245. Lardner has very well cleared up this obſcure paſſage: Credibility, vol. ii. p. 266—269.

Theſſalonicenſes. Si potes in Aſiam tendere; habes Epheſum. Si autem Italiæ adjaces; habes Romam; unde nobis quoque auctoritas præſto eſt."

SECT. III.

Evidences from Works of the Second Century, which are now loſt.

THE enemies of our religion complain often and loudly of the loſs of thoſe writings againſt Chriſtianity, which were compoſed by its ancient opponents; and ſome of them accuſe the Chriſtians, in language by no means doubtful, of having been the cauſe of the deſtruction of theſe works. But they do not take into conſideration, that of the writings alſo of the ancient friends and defenders of Chriſtianity many more have been loſt than have been preſerved. And that, together with theſe writings, many important evidences for the Authenticity of the New

New Teſtament have alſo periſhed. We have already[u] regretted this loſs when we treated above of the hiſtory of the firſt century. In the ſecond this deficiency is ſtill greater and more to be lamented.

1. Concerning Dionyſius, Biſhop of Corinth, Euſebius gives us the following information[v]: — He wrote ſeven epiſtles to different Chriſtian communities, and another to a Chriſtian matron: in the epiſtle to the community at Athens he exhorted men to believe and to act according to the Goſpel: in the epiſtle to the Nicomedians he defended the true canon (or, as others tranſlate it, the rule of truth, τῳ της αληθειας παριςαται κανονι), in oppoſition to the hereſy of Marcion: in the epiſtle to the church at Amaſtris he had inſerted expoſitions of the Di-

[u] Book ii. chap. 1.

[v] Euſebii. Hiſt. Eccl. Lib. IV. cap. xxiii. p. 184—187. edit. Reading.

vine Scriptures.—All theſe epiſtles are now loſt; and with them much important information, and many weighty evidences for the Authenticity of the New Teſtament.

2. In the work of Tatian, which ſtill remains [x], we find (on account of the particular purpoſe for which it was compoſed), few alluſions to the apoſtolical writings.—But of theſe he had treated ſo much the more amply in his Harmony, or Δια Τεσσαρων, a Goſpel compoſed from the four Goſpels taken together. This work was well known to Euſebius [y]; and although the author might have inſerted his heretical principles even here, yet the loſs of this work is greatly to be lamented as well for many other cauſes as on account of its great antiquity [z].—Irenæus [a], and Clement of Alexandria [b], allude to

x See above, p. 108.

y Hiſt. Eccleſ. Lib. IV. cap. xxix. p. 193, 194.

z See Valeſius in Euſebium, l. cit.

a Lib. III. cap. xxiii. §. viii. p. 222. ed. Maſſueti.

b Stromat, Lib. III. p. 547. Potteri.

other

other writings of this author, in which he attempted to prove ſome of his heterodox tenets by quotations from the *firſt Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.*

3. Hegeſippus, a convert from Judaiſm, compoſed five books of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, in which he gave an account of the apoſtolical preaching[c]. But of this work we have nothing remaining except a few fragments preſerved by Euſebius and Photius. Although the hiſtorian might not have entirely laid aſide that credulity and inclination for the fabulous, which was peculiar to the Jews of his time (and that this was the caſe is plain from the extracts in the above-mentioned authors), nevertheleſs, the loſs of his work is much to be lamented; becauſe there undoubtedly exiſted in it much material information for a hiſtory of the ſcriptural writings, which he muſt

[c] Euſebius Hiſt. Eccleſ. Lib. IV. cap. viii. p. 150.

have

5. Of the terrible perſecutions which the Chriſtians in Gaul ſuffered in the time of the Emperour Marcus Antoninus, we find a very affecting relation in the epiſtle which the communities at Vienne and Lyons, in France, ſent on this account to the Chriſtians in Aſia. Euſebius has preſerved a great part of it in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory[h]. The ſufferings of the Chriſtians, the patience, cheerfulneſs, and ſtedfaſt behaviour of the martyrs, are deſcribed by ſentiments and expreſſions which are taken from the Scriptures of the New Teſtament.—"Then was the ſaying of the Lord fulfilled, *The time will come when whoſoever killeth you*

deſirous of knowing accurately the *old ſcriptures*, their number, and the order in which they were compoſed, —— I have therefore inquired after the *books of the Old Teſtament*,' &c.—This paſſage appears to prove, that at that time exiſted alſo a *ſecond collection of ſacred books*, under the name of the *New Teſtament*.—See Lardner, l. cit. p. 148.

[h] Lib. V. cap. i—ix. p. 198. ſq.

will

will think that he doth God ſervice." John xvi. 2.—"They (viz. the martyrs) prayed for their executioners, as did the holy Stephen, *Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge.*" Acts vii. 60. —"They endeavoured to follow the example of Chriſt, *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God.*" Phil. ii. 6.—"He (a martyr of the name of Vettius Epagathus) was a true diſciple of Chriſt, *following the Lamb whitherſoever it goes.*" Rev. xiv. 4.—When we reflect that this epiſtle was written by a community in which Irenæus (who has depoſed ſuch ample evidence for the Scriptures of the New Teſtament, p. 109.) was at that time a Preſbyter, we may without heſitation uſe theſe paſſages as proofs of the *antiquity of the Goſpel of St. John, of the Acts of the Apoſtles by St. Luke, of the Epiſtles to the Romans* and *Philippians*, and of *the Revelation of St. John*;

although theſe books are not quoted by name.

6. Miltiades, one of the Apologiſts for Chriſtianity, was, according to the information of Euſebius[i], well ſkilled in the Divine Scriptures and Chriſtian theology. He had given convincing proofs of his erudition in a book which he wrote againſt the Montaniſts with this title, περι του μη δειν προφητην εν εκστασει λαλειν, 'That it does not become prophets to ſpeak in ecſtacy;' and in his works againſt the Jews and Gentiles[k].—"He has alſo left us," ſays Euſebius, "as well in his writings againſt the Gentiles, as in thoſe againſt the Jews, monuments of his zeal for the divine books."—Without doubt, therefore, he had copiouſly uſed the

[i] Hiſt. Eccleſ. Lib. V. cap. xvii. p. 232, 233.

[k] See Euſebius, l. cit.—In the firſt work he had undoubtedly made mention of the *firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians*. Compare the remark of Valeſius in loc. cit.

authorities

authorities of the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament.

7. I have produced Theophilus of Antioch above (p. 122.) as an evidence for the authenticity of the Goſpels of St. Matthew and St. John, of the Epiſtle to the Romans, and alſo of the firſt Epiſtle to Timothy.—Did the work which he wrote againſt Hermogenes, προς την αιρεσιν Ερμογενους, ſtill exiſt, we might likewiſe prove from him the *antiquity of the Revelation of St. John*[1].

8. Pantænus, whom Euſebius[m], apparently by miſtake, mentions as preſident of the catechetical ſchool at Alexandria, was, as this author informs us, ſuch a faithful and learned

1 See Euſebius, Hiſt. Eccleſ. Lib. IV. cap. xxiv. p. 287,—who ſays, that Theophilus in the above-mentioned book had taken ſome of his proofs from the Revelation of St. John, εν ᾧ εκ της αποκαλυψεως Ιωαννου κεχρηται μαρτυριαις.

m Hiſt. Eccleſ. Lib. V. cap. x. p. 222, 223.—See Lardner's Credibility, vol. ii. p. 203.

ſupporter

ſupporter of Chriſtianity, that he would have inſtructed poſterity as uſefully by his writings, as he did his contemporaries by his ſermons.—He preached the Goſpel in India[n], and is ſaid to have found there the Goſpel of St. Matthew in the Hebrew language[o]. Whether this information, which Euſebius gives in a doubtful manner, be true or not, nevertheleſs it proves thus

[n] The old eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians mean frequently by this name Arabia Felix; ſee Michaelis Intr. to the N. T. vol. iii. p. 124. of the learned Mr. Marſh's Tranſ.; but here it is India properly ſo called, India on the Ganges. Chriſtianity was preached there in the firſt century by the Apoſtle St. Thomas. This is aſſerted—1. By the ancient writers conſulted by Euſebius, Hiſt. eccleſ. iii. 1. v. 10.—2. By the moſt learned hiſtorians of the Eaſt, Aſſeman bibl. orient. tom. III. par. i. p. 611, and par. ii. p. 25.—And 3. By thoſe Chriſtian ſects, which have exiſted from the moſt early antiquity in India, particularly on the coaſts of Malabar, who have an ancient tradition to the ſame purpoſe, and therefore call themſelves St. Thomas's Chriſtians.—La Croze, 38.

[o] Euſebius l. cit. ἐνθα λογος ἐιχεν αὐτους — — το κατα Ματθαιον ευαγγελιον, κ. τ. λ.

much,

much, that the *Goſpel of St. Matthew* was already known in the *earlieſt ages.* —According to Jerom's relation[p], he compoſed alſo certain commentaries on the Bible.

9. The work of Clement of Alexandria, in which he principally conſidered the Holy Scriptures of the Chriſtians, his Hypotupoſes, is alſo loſt, except a few fragments. It contained explications of many books both of the Old and New Teſtament, eſpecially of the Epiſtles of St. Paul, and of the Catholic Epiſtles[q].—Euſebius has preſerved the following information from it[r]—That the Epiſtle to the Hebrews was written by St. Paul in the Hebrew language, and tranſlated into Greek by St. Luke his companion; that the Goſ-

[p] Hujus multi——in ſanctam ſcripturam extant Commentarii. De vir. illuſtr. cap. xxxvi.

[q] Euſebius. Hiſt. Eccleſ. Lib. VI. cap. xiv. p. 273. et Photius, Biblioth. Codice cix. p. 287. edit. Andr. Schotti. Rothomagi, 1653. folio.

[r] Loc. cit.

pels which contain the Genealogies (viz. of St. Matthew and St. Luke) were compoſed before the others; that St. Mark wrote his Goſpel at the requeſt of St. Peter's diſciples at Rome, and that St. Peter was ſo far from rejecting it, that, at the inſtigation of the Holy Ghoſt, he imparted a divine conſequence to it[a]; and that St. John had

[a] Loc. cit. Comp. Lib. II. cap. xv. pag. 64. Γνοντα δε το πραχθεν (viz. that St. Mark had compoſed in writing the ſpeeches of St. Peter, at the requeſt of the Romans) φασι τον Αποστολον (St. Peter) αποκαλυψαντος αυτῳ του Πνευματος ἡσθηναι τῃ των ανδρων προθυμιᾳ, κυρωσαι τε την γραφην (the Goſpel of St. Mark) εις εντευξιν ταις εκκλησιαις.—The ſentence αποκαλυψαντος αυτῳ του Πνευματος has been always referred by tranſlators to the preceding words; but if it be conſtrued with thoſe which follow, every difficulty will vaniſh.—"Peter, having diſcovered what had been done, and being inſtigated by the Holy Ghoſt, granted the deſire of thoſe men, (the Romans) and gave his ſanction to the Goſpel of St. Mark, that it ſhould be read in the Chriſtian communities." Lardner torments himſelf with the difficulty of this paſſage; Credibility, vol. ii. p. 215. But amidſt all his obſervations he has not reflected that the ſtructure of the words

had written πνευματικὸν ευαγγελιον, a Goſpel which treated eſpecially of the divine nature of Chriſt, the others being principally employed on his human. Τον ... Ιωαννην εσκαῖον συνιδοντα, ὁτι τὰ σωματικὰ ἐν τοις ευαγγελιοις δεδηλωται, προτραπεντα ὑπο των γνωριμων πνευματι θεοφορηθεντα πνευματικον ποιησαι ευαγγελιον. Euſebius and Jerom would have performed ſtill greater ſervice to poſterity, had they made longer and more complete extracts from thoſe writings of conſiderable teachers which exiſted in their times. Both of them notice various teachers of the ſecond century who had written commentaries on the ſcriptural books. But as they are ſilent on their contents, we can neither determine what information theſe

words in Euſebius does not by any means neceſſitate the connection of αποκαλυψ. κ. τ. λ. with γνοντα—Αποστολον: as if the Holy Ghoſt had revealed to St. Peter, that the Romans had petitioned St. Mark to compoſe his Goſpel, and that he had granted their requeſt.

writers gave, nor on what books of the Bible they had employed their labours [t].

CHAP.

[t] We can make no uſe of the ſpurious writings of this century for our preſent purpoſe.—1. The Acts of Paul and of Thecla attribute indeed many of the ſame ſentiments to the Apoſtle St. Paul, as exiſt in the books of our New Teſtament. But it is uncertain whether this be the ſame work which is mentioned by the Eccleſiaſtical Fathers. (Lardner's Credibility, vol. ii. p. 310).—2. The Sibylline Oracles were forged in all probability about the ſecond century. They alſo relate (in prophecy, as they pretend) almoſt every ſingle event of the evangelical hiſtory. But they do not mention either expreſsly, or by name, any of the writings of the New Teſtament. Lardner, l. cit. p. 313. ſeq.—3. The Teſtaments of the Twelve Patriarchs ſpeak often in the language of the New Teſtament. But it is moſt uncertain, whether this writing be of that early antiquity which many ſcholars imagine. Origen quotes a work under this title. But how can it be proved that the work, which we ſtill poſſeſs, is the very ſame? Lardner, l. cit. p. 324. ſeq.—4. The Recognitions of Clement, (ſee Cotelerii Patres Apoſtol. vol. i. p. 483. ſeq.) which contain Diſputations of the Apoſtle St. Peter with Simon Magus, and mention other diſcourſes, and a variety of miracles by the ſame Apoſtle;—5. The Clementine Homilies, which are almoſt of the very ſame tenour,

CHAP. III.

Witneſſes in the Third Century.

SECT. I.

Evidences of Witneſſes in the Third Century.

BEFORE I introduce the complete catalogues, which Origen and Euſebius have left us, of thoſe writings which the Chriſtians of the firſt century held as genuine works of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles, and venerated as divine

tenour, and in all probability are the ground-work from which, after many additions and improvements, aroſe the work mentioned above, in No. 4. (Cotelerius, l. cit. p. 603. ſeq.);—And, 6. The Clementine Epitome, a compilation out of the Recognitions and Homilies, (Cotelerius, l. cit. p. 755. ſeq.)——: theſe three works, to which the venerable name of Clement has been forged, contain merely ſimilar expreſſions and ſentiments, but not a ſingle quotation, either expreſsly, or by name, from the books of our New Teſtament. Extracts from the above-mentioned writings may be ſeen in Lardner, l. cit. p. 342. ſeq.

books, I will curſorily mention ſome other witneſſes who lived in the beginning of the third century, but whoſe writings have not deſcended to us.

1. *Caius Romanus.*

CAIUS, who was a Preſbyter of the church of Rome, and a moſt learned man, quotes in his Dialogue with Proculus, a follower of Montanus, *all the Epiſtles* which we have at preſent under the name of *St. Paul*, as *genuine works* of this Apoſtle, *except the Epiſtle to the Hebrews*, which he has omitted to enumerate among the reſt. —We find this information in an extract which Euſebius has preſerved from this work which no longer exiſts [t].

2. *Hippolytus Portuenſis.*

From the fragments which we ſtill poſſeſs of the works [u] of Hippolytus Portuenſis,

[t] Hiſt. Eccleſ. Lib. VI. ch. xx. p. 285.

[u] Joh. Albert Fabricius has collected theſe fragments,

Portuenſis, we are led to believe that he was a learned man; and the conciſeneſs, ſolidity, and force with which he wrote, clearly prove that he far excelled all the writers of his time. In ſupport of this I ſhall quote a ſingle paſſage[x], which, if not an adequate teſtimony for the authenticity of our four Goſpels, will at leaſt demonſtrate the truth of the hiſtory related in them. Hippolytus is proving that Jeſus was both perfect man, and perfect God. "His humanity," ſays he, "may be eaſily perceived, by the circumſtances of his feeling hunger and fatigue and thirſt; by his fearfully fleeing, and anxiouſly praying; by his ſleeping on a pillow; his imploring for the removal of the cup of ſorrow; his

ments, and publiſhed them together with the other works attributed to him, at Hamburg, 1716, 2 vol. folio.

[x] It has been preſerved by Theodoret. See Fabricii Hippolyt. vol. i. p. 268.

ſweating from fear of death, and his being ſtrengthened by an angel; by his being betrayed by Judas, mocked by Caiaphas and Herod, ſcourged by Pilate, inſulted by the ſoldiers, and crucified by the Jews; his commending with a loud voice his ſpirit to the Father; his bending his head and giving up the ghoſt; having his ſide pierced by a ſpear, being laid, wrapped up in fine linen, in the grave, and raiſed up on the third day by the Father. His divinity may be eaſily diſcovered, ſince he was worſhipped by angels, viſited by ſhepherds, expected by Simeon; he received the teſtimony of Anna, was viſited by the Magi, and announced by a ſtar; he changed water into wine at the marriage feaſt, calmed the ſtormy ſea, walked upon the water, gave ſight to one born blind, raiſed Lazarus to life, who had been dead four days, and performed many other miracles, forgiving ſins, and imparting miraculous

miraculous powers to his Apoſtles."—As early as the time of Euſebius this writer was ſo little known, that men were even ignorant of what place he was Biſhop[y]. And ſcholars of the preſent day, after having examined all the documents of antiquity, remain ſtill uncertain whether we poſſeſs any writings which can be ſafely attributed to him[z]. We do not even know whether he lived in Italy or in Arabia; whether he was a divine or a ſtateſman[a].

3. *Ammonius.*

Ammonius (whom Euſebius and Jerom ſuppoſe to have been the cele-

[y] Ἱππολυτος, ἱτιρας—πρεσβυτερου ἐκκλησιας. Hiſt. Eccl. Lib. VI. cap. xx. p. 284.

[z] See Mill's Prolegomena in N. T. Num. 655. et Fabricius Præfat. in Hippol.

[a] Some believe that he was Biſhop of Porto, in Italy; others, of Portus Romanus, in Arabia Felix. See Fabricius l. cit.—Heumann aſſerts, that he was not a ſpiritual, but a temporal πρωτοστατης.

brated

brated Alexandrian philoſopher Ammonius Saccas), compoſed a Harmony of the Four Goſpels, in which he had uſed the Goſpel of St. Matthew as a foundation [b]. That which we poſſeſs at preſent under his name is, if not entirely forged, at leaſt very much mutilated [c]. I therefore reckon this work among the loſt writings of antiquity; and would proceed directly to the catalogues of Origen, but have yet to remark that

4. *Julius Africanus,*

WHO flouriſhed in the beginning of this century, has afforded an evidence for the authenticity of the *Goſpels of St. Matthew and St. Luke,* in the epiſtle to Ariſtides, in which he endea-

[b] Euſebius Hiſt. Eccl. Lib. VI. c. 19. p. 282. Ejuſd. epiſtola ad Carpianum, which is prefixed to his Harmony. Hieronymus, De Vir. Illuſtr. cap. lv.

[c] See Wetſtein Prolegom. ad N. T. Tom. I. p. 65. ſequ. Comp. Lardner's Credibility, Vol. II. p. 413, and the following pages.

vours

vours to remove the apparent contradiction in the genealogy of Chriſt as delivered by theſe Evangeliſts [4].

5. *Origen.*

ORIGEN, the moſt learned and laborious of all the fathers, who was in ſuch high eſtimation even among the heathen philoſophers, that they dedicated their writings to him, and tranſmitted them to him for his reviſal [5], has particularly diſtinguiſhed himſelf by his labours on the biblical writings. He not only compoſed a celebrated critical work on the Old Teſtament, but wrote alſo a threefold expoſition of the books of the whole Bible; Scholia, or ſhort notes;—Tomes, or extenſive commentaries, in which he employed all his learning, critical, ſacred, and prophane;—and

[4] See the extract from the above mentioned epiſtle in Euſebius Hiſt. Eccl. Lib. I. cap. vii. p. 21—25.

[5] Euſebius Hiſt. Eccl. Lib. VI. cap. xix. p. 279.

Tracts,

Tracts, or homilies to the people[f]. Of theſe only a ſmall portion is come down to us, and that for the moſt part in Latin tranſlations made by Jerom or Rufinus; the reſt have been deſtroyed by the ravages of time.

He is the firſt who has given us *a perfect catalogue* of thoſe books, which Chriſtians unanimouſly, or at leaſt the major part of them have conſidered as genuine writings of the Apoſtles, and as works of divine inſpiration.—In his thirteenth Homily, upon Geneſis[g], he diſcovers in the ſervants of Iſaac, who dug ciſterns, a type of the ſcriptural writers. "His ſervants," ſays he, "are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John: His ſervants alſo are Peter, James, Jude, and the Apoſtle Paul: who all

[f] Hieronymus, Prolegom. in Ezechiel.—He ſuperintended alſo a very accurate edition of the whole New Teſtament, Hieronymus in Matth. xxiv. 36. Origenes in Joan. 1. Comp. Erneſti De Origene interpr. gr. auct.—in the Opuſc. Theol. p. 306, ſeq.

[g] Operum Tom. II. p. 95. edit. De la Rue.

dig

dig the wells of the New Teſtament." —In the ſame manner he allegoriſes[h] the hiſtory of Joſhua, in his ſeventh Homily on this book[i]. "When our Lord Jeſus Chriſt came, of whom that ſon of Nave was a type, he ſent forth the prieſts, his Apoſtles, with trumpets, from which they ſounded the heaveuly doctrine. Matthew ſounds firſt with his prieſtly trumpet in his Goſpel. Mark alſo, and Luke and John ſounded each his own trumpet. In like manner Peter ſounds aloud with the two trumpets of his Epiſtles; as does James alſo and Jude. John ſounds again with his trumpet, in his Epiſtles and in the Revelation; and Luke in his Acts of the Apoſtles. Laſt of all appeared he who ſaid of himſelf, 'and laſt of all God appointed me an Apoſtle,' and thundered with the trumpets

[h] Concerning this pernicious and abſurd mode of interpretation, ſee above, p. 97.

[i] Oper. Tom. II. p. 412.

of

of his fourteen Epiſtles ſo powerfully that the walls of Jericho, and all the machines of ſuperſtition, and the doctrines of the philoſophers fell to the ground."

The paſſages here quoted are extant at preſent only in the Latin verſion. Euſebius has been at the pains to collect in a particular chapter[k], the catalogue of the books of the New Teſtament from the works of Origen. From his Commentary upon the Goſpel of St. Matthew he copies the following paſſage, which determines what hiſtories of the life of Jeſus were univerſally received among the Chriſtians. "I have learned by tradition (the evidences of antiquity) concerning the four Goſpels, which are excluſively received without diſpute by the whole church of God under heaven, That

[k] Cap. xxv. Lib. VI. p. 289—292. The title of this Chapter is, ὁπως των ενδιαθηκων γραφων εμνημονευσε, namely, Origen.

the

the firſt was written by St. Matthew—who compoſed it in the Hebrew language for the uſe of the proſelytes from Judaiſm;—the ſecond by St. Mark,—the third by St. Luke,—and the laſt by St. John."—Concerning the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles, the hiſtorian gives us from the 'Commentaries upon St. John's Goſpel,' and the 'Homilies on the Epiſtle to the Hebrews,' the following information; "St. Paul did not write to all the communities which he himſelf had eſtabliſhed, and the Epiſtles which he did write are not long. St. Peter has left one Epiſtle, univerſally acknowledged; the ſecond alſo ought not to be entirely excluded from the number of his works, becauſe the matter is ſtill doubtful. St. John has written a Goſpel, the Revelation, and a ſhort Epiſtle. The ſecond and third Epiſtles ought not to be entirely rejected, ſince they were conſidered by various people as genuine works of

St.

St. John. The Epiſtle to the Hebrews could not well come from St. Paul, becauſe the Greek in which it is written is more elegant than that of the other Epiſtles of this Apoſtle. In all probability the ſubject matter was furniſhed by St. Paul, but the conſtruction of the words is the work of ſome other perſon who recorded the thoughts of the Apoſtle, and illuſtrated them with various remarks."—This is Origen's review of the writings of the New Teſtament; I will inſert below the whole paſſage of Euſebius, from which I have here only extracted certain parts [1]. Whoever deſires to receive

[1] Loc. cit. p. 290, 291. εν δε τω πρωτω των εις το κατα Ματθαιον ευαγγελιον, τον εκκλησιαστικον φυλαττων κανονα, μονα τεσσαρα ειδεναι ευαγγελια μαρτυρεται, ωδι πως γραφων· ως εν παραδοσει μαθων περι των τεσσαρων ευαγγελιων, α και μονα αναντιρρητα εστιν εν τη υπο τον ουρανον εκκλησια του Θεου· ότι πρωτον μεν γεγραπται το κατα τον ποτε τελωνην, υστερον δε αποστολον Ιησου Χριστου Ματθαιον, εκδιδοκοτα αυτο τοις απο Ιουδαϊσμου πιστευσασι, γραμμασιν εβραϊκοις συντεταγμενον· δευτερον

ceive further information of this teacher's evidences for the New Teſtament,

τερόν δε το κατα Μαρκον, ὡς Πετρος ὑφηγησατο αυτῳ ποιησαντα, ὃν και υἱον εν τῃ καθολικῃ επιστολῃ δια τουτων ὁμολογησε φασκων, ασπαζεται ὑμας ἡ εν Βαβυλωνι συνεκλεκτη, και Μαρκος, ὁ υἱος μου· και τριτον το κατα Λουκαν, το ὑπο Παυλου επαινουμενον ευαγγελιον, τοις απο των εθνων πεποιηκοτα· επι πασι το κατα Ιωαννην· και εν τῳ πεμπτῳ δε των εις το κατα Ιωαννην εξηγητικων, ὁ αυτος ταυτα περι των επιστολων των Αποστολων φησιν· ὁ δε ικανωθεις διακονος γενεσθαι της καινης διαθηκης ου γραμματος αλλα πνευματος Παυλος· ἑ πεπληρωκως το ευαγγελιον απο Ἱερουσαλημ και κυκλῳ μεχρι του Ιλλυρικου, ουδε πασαις εγραψεν, ἁις εδιδαξεν εκκλησιαις· αλλα και ἁις εγραψεν, ολιγους στιχους επεστειλε· Πετρος δε εφ' ᾧ οικοδομειται ἡ Χριστου εκκλησια, ἡς πυλαι ᾅδου ου κατισχυσουσι, μιαν επιστολην ὁμολογουμενην καταλελοιπεν· εστω δε και δευτεραν, αμφιβαλλεται γαρ. τι δει περι του αναπεσοντος λεγειν επι το στηθος του Ιησου, Ιωαννου; ὁς ευαγγελιον ἐν καταλελοιπεν, ὁμολογων δυνασθαι τοσαυτα ποιησειν, ἁ ουδε ὁ κοσμος χωρησαι εδυνατο· εγραψε δε και την αποκαλυψιν, κελευθεις σιωπησαι και μη γραψαι τας των ἑπτα βροντων φωνας· καταλελοιπε δε και επιστολην παυ ολιγων στιχων· εστω δε και δευτεραν και τριτην· επει ου παντες φασι γνησιους ειναι ταυτας· πλην ουκ εισι στιχων αμφοτεραι ἑκατον· ετι προς τουτοις περι της προς Ἑβραιους επιστολης εν ταις εις αυτην ὁμιλιαις ταυτα διαλαμβανει· ὁτι ὁ χαρακτηρ της

ment, may conſult Lardner's Credibility, in which this article is treated with moſt particular attention.

SECT. II.

Information collected by Euſebius from the Works of the Three Firſt Centuries.

HAD the writers of the two firſt centuries poſſeſſed the ſame anxious care

λεξεως της προς Εβραιους επιγεγραμμενης επιστολης, ουκ εχει το εν λογῳ ιδιωτικον του Αποστολου, ὁμολογησαντος ἑαυτον ιδιωτην ειναι τῳ λογῳ, τουτ' εστι τῃ φρασει· αλλα εστιν ἡ επιστολη συνθεσει της λεξεως Ἑλληνικωτερα, πας ὁ επισταμενος κρινειν φρασεων διαφορας, ὁμολογησαι αν· παλιν τε αν ὁτι τα νοηματα της επιστολης θαυμασια εστι, και ου δευτερα των Αποστολικων ὁμολογουμενων γραμματων, και τουτο αν συμφησαι ειναι αληθες, πας ὁ προσεχων τῃ αναγνωσει τη Αποστολικῃ· τουτοις μεθ' ἑτερα επιφερει λεγων. εγω δε αποφαινομενος ειποιμ' αν, ὁτι τα μεν νοηματα του Αποστολου εστιν ἡ δε φρασις και ἡ συνθεσις, απομνημονευσαντος τινος τα αποστολικα, και ὡσπερει σχολιογραφησαντος τα ειρημενα ὑπο του διδασκαλου· ει τις ουν εκκλησια εχει ταυτην

care for poſterity which Origen evinced, we ſhould have been able to prove the authenticity of the books of the New Teſtament with greater eaſe and more ſatisfaction. Yet Euſebius has, in a certain degree, ſupplied the loſs. This father of eccleſiaſtical-hiſtory aſſures us that he had read the works of Chriſtian antiquity with great diligence, and eſpecially with the view of aſcertaining what writings had been received ſince the origin of Chriſtianity as genuine works of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles. He imparts the reſult of this inquiry in ſeveral particular chapters of his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. —In the Third book[m] he treats of the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles; reſpecting which, he had found in the works of

ταυτην επιστολην ὑπ Παυλω, αὐτη ευδοκιμειτο και επι τυτῳ· ω γαρ εικη οἱ αρχαιοι ανδρες ὡς Παυλω παραδιδωκασι· τις δε ὁ γραψας την επιστολην, το μεν αληθες Θεος οιδε.

[m] Cap. iii. iv. and xxiv. p. 89—92, and 115—118.

the *firſt* and *ſecond* centuries the following information: 'That the firſt Epiſtle of St. Peter has always been univerſally received as divine: but that called his ſecond Epiſtle, although not received as divine, ενδιαθηκος; has nevertheleſs been carefully ſtudied as an uſeful work; that the fourteen Epiſtles, which go under the name of St. Paul, have been univerſally revered as divine ſcriptures, except that ſome have doubted concerning the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, becauſe the Romiſh church did not conſider it to be the work of St. Paul[n]. That St. Luke, a phyſician, has left us two books, divinely inſpired, namely, a Goſpel, and the Acts of the Apoſtles; and that many of the ancients were of opinion that St. Paul means this Goſpel whenever he ſpeaks of ſome Goſpel

[n] Τινες ηθετηκασι την προς Εβραιους, προς της Ρωμαιων εκκλησιας ως μη Παυλου ουσαν αυτην αντιλεγεσθαι φησαντες.

of

of his (St. Paul's) own. That the Goſpels were written in the following order of time; St. Matthew's firſt of all, for the Hebrews, and in the Hebrew language; then St. Mark's, which was compoſed at the requeſt of the Chriſtians at Rome; afterwards that of St. Luke, who was induced to undertake it from the ſpurious goſpels which were at that time in circulation; and that laſt of all St. John had peruſed the three preceding and confirmed them; yet, as they related only the actions of Chriſt which took place after the impriſonment of John the Baptiſt, he therefore had thought it neceſſary to write his Goſpel, and ſupply in it what was wanting in the others: and that he in particular had received the matter concerning the Divinity of Chriſt from the Holy Ghoſt. That beſides this Goſpel, the firſt Epiſtle, which bears the name of St. John, has been univerſally aſcribed

to him both by ancients and moderns; that the ſecond and third Epiſtles were rejected by ſome; and that the majority were perfectly in doubt concerning The Revelation [o].'

Euſebius has given the moſt perfect account of this ſubject in the twenty-fifth chapter of the third book [p]; in which he collects and lays before the reader the reſult of the information contained in detached parts of the preceding books.

In this he delivers not his own private opinion, but the opinion of the church, εκκλησιαστικη παραδωσις, the ſum

[o] Ἡ προτερα των επιστολων παρα τι τοις νυν και τοις ετι αρχαιοις αναμφιλεκτος ὁμολογηται· αντιλεγονται δε ἁι λοιπαι δυο της δ' ἀποκαλυψεως ἡφ' ἑκατερου ετι νυν παρα τοις πολλοις περιειλκυσται ἡ δοξα. Loc. cit. p. 118. But concerning the Revelation, *Even yet* (that is, notwithſtanding all preceding inquiries) *the majority are in doubt*, (know not, whether to hold it genuine or ſpurious.)

[p] The commencement of the chapter is as follows: Ευλογον δ' ενταυθα γενομενους ανακεφαλαιωσασθαι τας δηλωθεισας της καινης διαθηκης γραφας·

of

of what he had found in the writings of the primitive Chriſtians. The cited paſſage contains conſequently the opinion of the whole Chriſtian church during the three firſt centuries; and a proper inſight into its meaning is of great importance to us. — Euſebius unites the νοθαι γραφαι (thoſe writings which were actually ſpurious, or thought ſuch) with the αντιλεγομεναι (the doubtful). After having ſpoken of the αντιλεγομεναι, he immediately adds, εν τοις νοθοις και καταντιταχθω των Παυλε πραξεις η γραφη, ὁ, τε λεγομενος Ποιμην "among the ſpurious are to be reckoned the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd," &c. Whence it appears to me clear, that he ſpeaks in this paſſage of the authenticity of the books, whether they are genuine or ſpurious, and not of their divine inſpiration. — Again, he calls the ὁμολογουμεναι γραφαι (univerſally received books) alſo, αληθης και απλαστοι, genuine and not forged; and

oppoſes them to thoſe which were falſely attributed to the Apoſtles, ταις ονοματι των Αποστολων προφερομεναις.—He places the Revelation of St. John alſo under the νοθα or αντιλεγομενα, for this reaſon, becauſe the majority of the ancients doubted whether they ſhould conſider it as the writing of St. John the Apoſtle, or of ſome other perſon, conſequently as genuine or ſpurious.—Laſtly, he alſo claſſes the Shepherd of Hermas, the Revelation of Peter, the Acts of Paul, and the Epiſtle of Barnabas, under the νοθα (or, αντιλεγομενα). Now among the ancients none ever thought theſe books divine [q], but their authenticity indeed has been called in queſtion.

Theſe arguments evince, if I miſtake not, that Euſebius ſpeaks here of the authenticity, not of the divine inſpiration of thoſe writings which exiſted in his time under the names of

[q] See above, p. 48, note 9.

the

the Apoſtles, Evangeliſts, and apoſtolical men. His intention in this place is not to mention what writings were conſidered as divine; but to aſcertain the three following points:—1. What writings were received by the ancients as genuine works of the Apoſtles, Evangeliſts, and apoſtolical men:—2. Of what writings the authenticity had been called in queſtion:—And 3. Thoſe which were entirely rejected, as ſpurious.

On theſe points the opinion of the three firſt centuries was as follows:

I. Ὁμολογουμεναι γραφαι (ανωμολογημεναι; or, αληθεις και απλαστοι) writings which were *univerſally* received as the genuine works of the perſons whoſe names they bear.

In this claſs Euſebius reckons, 1. The four Goſpels; 2. The Acts of the Apoſtles; 3. The Epiſtles of St. Paul; 4. The firſt Epiſtle of St. John; 5. The firſt Epiſtle of St. Peter. The Revelation

Revelation of St. John might alſo *perhaps* be placed in this claſs, becauſe *ſome* think its authenticity incontrovertible, yet the *majority* leave the matter undetermined [r].

II. Αντιλεγομεναι, writings on whoſe authenticity the ancients were *not unanimous*; which ſome held to be ſuppoſititious [s].

According to Euſebius, even theſe have the *majority of voices* among the ancients in their favour. He expreſsly calls them, γνωριμα ὁμως τοις παλλοις (writings acknowledged *by moſt* to be genuine), and παρα πλειοσις των εκκλησιαστικων γινωσκομενα (received by the majority). A few doubted of their authenticity; and therefore Euſebius ranks them under the conteſted, αντιλεγομενα, or νοθα.

[r] See above, p. 166.

[s] He names theſe writings alſo νοθαι γραφαι, ſpurious writings; that is, according to the opinion of ſome. Theſe νοθαι do not, therefore, compoſe a diſtinct claſs, as is the general ſuppoſition;

In

In this claſs he enumerates, of the writings of the New Teſtament, 1. The Epiſtle of St. James; 2. The Epiſtle of St. Jude; 3. The ſecond Epiſtle of St. Peter; 4. The ſecond and third Epiſtles of St. John. The Revelation of St. John, he adds, is alſo by ſome placed in this claſs [t].

And, of other writings, the Acts of St. Paul; The Shepherd of Hermas; The Revelation of St. Peter; the Epiſtle of Barnabas; The Doctrines of the Apoſtles; and the Goſpel according to the Hebrews.

III. Ατοπα και δυσσεβη, (abſurd and impious); Writings which had been *univerſally rejected* as *evidently ſpurious.*

In this claſs he includes the Goſpels of Peter, of Thomas, and of Matthias;

[t] For in early times ſome believed that this work was not compoſed by John the apoſtle, but by a preſbyter of the ſame name, or by ſome other perſon. See the following 5th chapter of this book.

the

the Acts of Andrew, of John, and of other Apoſtles. Theſe writings, ſays he, contain evident errors, are written in a ſtyle entirely different from that of the Apoſtles, and have not been thought worthy of being mentioned by any one of the ancients.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

A ſummary Recapitulation of the Evidences mentioned above.

I WILL now reduce into order the depoſitions of the witneſſes, who have been already ſeparately examined, and enable the reader to perceive at one view what has been the opinion of men during the *two firſt centuries and half* on each individual book of the New Teſtament.

I. *The Goſpel by St. Matthew*

IS pronounced to be a genuine work of the Evangeliſt whoſe name it bears, 1. by Papias, 87*; 2. by many ancient writers of the firſt century, conſulted

* The figures after the names of the different witneſſes enumerated in this chapter, refer to the pages of this work, where their evidences may be found.

by

by Euſebius, 89; 3. by Juſtin Martyr, 105; 4. Tatian, 136; 5. Irenæus, 110; 6. Athenagoras, 117; 7. Theophilus of Antioch, 123; 8. Clement of Alexandria, 125; 9. Tertullian, 132; 10. Ammonius 153; 11. Julius Africanus, 154; 11. Origen, 155; and by all the primitive writers, without exception, whom Euſebius had read, 169.

And this may be inferred alſo, yet only with a degree of *probability*, from the writings of Barnabas, 37; Clement of Rome, 53; Ignatius, 78; and Polycarp, 81[u].

[u] Lardner has collected together the evidences of the later witneſſes in his Supplement to the firſt book of the ſecond part of the Goſpel Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 95—102. of the firſt edition.—He has treated of them more copiouſly in the work which has been ſo often mentioned, his Credibility of the Goſpel Hiſtory.—In the Supplement he has generally confined himſelf to thoſe witneſſes who determine alſo the time when the different books of Holy Writ were compoſed. The reader will therefore find more witneſſes enumerated in my Catalogue than in his.

II. *The Goſpel by St. Mark*

IS declared to be a genuine writing of the Evangeliſt, to whom it is aſcribed, by 1. Papias, 87; 2. many ancient writers of the firſt century, conſulted by Euſebius, 89; 3. Juſtin Martyr, 105; 4. Tatian, 136; 5. Irenæus, 110; 6. Clement of Alexandria, 125; 7. Tertullian, 132; 8. Ammonius, 153; 9. Origen, 155; and by all the ancients whom Euſebius had read, 169.

Clement of Rome, 53; and Ignatius, 78, were, probably, of the ſame opinion *.

III. *The Goſpel and Acts of the Apoſtles by St. Luke,*

ARE adopted as the undeniable works of St. Luke, the companion and diſciple of St. Paul, by, 1. the ancient writers of the firſt century, conſulted

* For the later witneſſes, ſee Lardner's Supplement, vol. i. p. 173—180, of the firſt edition.

by

by Euſebius, 89; 2. Juſtin Martyr, 105; 3. Tatian, 136; 4. Irenæus, 110; 5. Clement of Alexandria, 125; 6. Tertullian, 132; 7. Ammonius, 153; 8. Julius Africanus, 154; 9. Origen, 155; and by all the ancient writers quoted by Euſebius, 169.

Clement of Rome, 53; Ignatius, 78; Polycarp, 81; and the Communities at Lyons and Vienne, 141, may alſo, perhaps, be reckoned among the number of witneſſes [x].

IV. *The Goſpel by St. John*

IS, with great unanimity and particular reſpect, conſidered as the genuine writing of this Apoſtle by, 1. the ancient writers of the firſt century, conſulted by Euſebius, 89; 2. by Juſtin Martyr, 105; 3. Tatian, 109. 136; 4. Irenæus, 110; 5. Theophilus of An-

[x] For the later witneſſes, ſee Lardner's Supplement, vol. i. p. 218—227. firſt edition.

tioch,

tioch, 123; 6. Clement of Alexandria, 125; 7. Tertullian, 132; 8. Ammonius, 153; 9. Origen, 155; and by all the Fathers cited by Euſebius, 169.

To theſe might be added the Communities at Lyons and Vienne, 141[y].

V. *The Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Romans*

IS declared to be authentic by, 1. Irenæus, 111; 2. Theophilus of Antioch, 123; 3. Clement of Alexandria, 125; 4. Tertullian, 132; 5. Caius, 150;

y Ibid. p. 382—390. — The Alogi, a ſect that exiſted in the ſecond century, are ſaid to have rejected it. But we have no information concerning theſe Alogi that can be depended on: for, properly ſpeaking, we have none elſe beſides the later and uncertain accounts of Philaſtrius and Epiphanius. And were the caſe otherwiſe, ſtill what can the teſtimony, or rather the bare aſſertion of anonymous perſons avail, when oppoſed to the unanimous, conſiderate, and weighty evidences of all the ancients, both learned and unlearned. See Walch's Hiſtory of Hereticks, vol. i. p. 569, ſq. of the original; and Profeſſor Schroeckh's Eccleſ. Hiſt. vol. iii. p. 175. ſeq. of the original.

6. Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients noticed by Eusebius, 169.

It would appear that this is also testified by Ignatius, 78; Polycarp, 82; and the Communities at Lyons and Vienne, 141.

VI. *The first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*

IS considered as genuine by, 1. Clement of Rome, 51; 2. Polycarp, 80; 3. Tatian, 137; 4. Irenæus, 111; 5. Athenagoras, 119; 6. Clement of Alexandria, 125; 7. Tertullian, 132; 8. Caius, 150; 9. Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients found in Eusebius, 169.

To the class of probable witnesses belongs Ignatius, 78.

VII. *The Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*

HAS the express testimony of Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125;

125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and of all the eccleſiaſtical fathers to whom Euſebius appeals, 169.

VIII. *The Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Galatians*

IS declared to be authentic by Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients found in Euſebius, 169.

IX. *The Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Epheſians*

HAS the teſtimony of Ignatius, 71; Polycarp, 81; Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and of all the primitive writers found in Euſebius, 169.

X. *The Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Philippians*

HAS the evidence of Polycarp, 79; Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and of all the Ancients noticed by Euſebius, 169.

And alſo, as appears probable, of the Communities at Lyons and Vienne, 141.

XI. *The Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Coloſſians*

IS atteſted by Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the eccleſiaſtical fathers conſulted by Euſebius, 169.

XII. *The Firſt Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Theſſalonians*

IS expreſsly pronounced by Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian,

Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients mentioned by Euſebius, 169;

Probably alſo by Polycarp, 78:

XIII. *The Second Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Theſſalonians,*

by Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients found in Euſebius, 169;

Perhaps by Polycarp, 78:

XIV. *The Firſt Epiſtle of St. Paul to Timothy,*

by Irenæus, 111; Theophilus of Antioch, 123; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the primitive writers noticed by Euſebius, 169;

And, with ſome degree of probability, by Polycarp, 82:

XV. *The Second Epiſtle of St. Paul to Timothy,*

by Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the Fathers found in Euſebius, 169:

XVI. *The Epiſtle of St. Paul to Titus,*

by Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients mentioned by Euſebius, 169—to be genuine works of this Apoſtle.

XVII. *The Epiſtle of St. Paul to Philemon*

IS but rarely mentioned by the eccleſiaſtical fathers in their writings, on account of its brevity and peculiar contents. Nevertheleſs, Irenæus, 109; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and all the Ancients

Ancients cited by Euſebius, 169; have pronounced it authentic.

Which is alſo teſtified, apparently, by Tertullian, 128.

XVIII. *The Firſt Epiſtle of St. Peter*

IS atteſted by Papias, 87; Irenæus, 112; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients found in Euſebius, 169.

To theſe may be added, perhaps, Polycarp, 82.

XIX. *The Second Epiſtle of St. Peter*

HAS the evidence of Origen, 155, who nevertheleſs ſpeaks in ſome degree doubtfully; and of the *greater part* of the Ancients conſulted by Euſebius, 170[z].

z See Lardner's Supplement, vol. iii. p. 215—224. 1ſt ed. and Michaelis' Introduction to the N. T. vol. iv. p. 346—356. of the learned Mr. Marſh's tranſlation.

XX. *The Firſt Epiſtle of St. John*

IS declared genuine by Papias, 87; Irenæus, 112; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients found in Euſebius, 169.

XXI. XXII. *The Second and Third Epiſtles of St. John.*

ORIGEN, 155; and many of the Ancients, 169, doubted of the authenticity of the ſecond and third Epiſtles of St. John. But the *majority of voices*, 170, pronounced them genuine works of this Apoſtle [a].

XXIII. *The Epiſtle of St. Paul to the Hebrews*

HAS the expreſs teſtimony of Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian,

[a] For the three Epiſtles of St. John, ſee Lardner's Supplement, vol. iii. p. 263—267. 1ſt edit. And for the two laſt, Michaelis' Introduc. to the N. T. vol. iv. p. 442—445. of Mr. Marſh's tranſlation.

132;

132; and of all the primitive writers, noticed by Euſebius, 169.

To theſe may be added Clement of Rome, 51; and Juſtin Martyr, 101.

XXIV. *The Epiſtle of St. James*

IS atteſted by the *major part* of the Ancients whom Euſebius quotes 170; to which the concordant teſtimony of the old Syriac Verſion adds conſiderable weight [b].

XXV. *The Epiſtle of St. Jude*

IS aſſerted to be genuine by Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian 132; Origen, 155; and by the *greater part* of the Ancients noticed by Euſebius, 170 [c].

[b] See Michaelis' Introduc. to the N. T. vol. iv. p. 308—314. of Mr. Marſh's tranſlation; and Lardner's Supp. vol. iii. p. 85—91. 1ſt edit.

[c] Compare Lardner's Supplement, vol. iii. p. 327—384. with Michaelis' Introduc. vol. iv. p. 374—395. of Mr. Marſh's tranſlation.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the Revelation of St. John.

THE Revelation of St. John, as it is called, is ſo much diſtinguiſhed from all the other writings of the New Teſtament, both by its contents and ſtyle, that we muſt ſeparate it from them, and inveſtigate its authenticity in a particular inquiry.

SECT. I.

The Contents of this Book.

THE whole book is entirely occupied with the deſcription of three viſions which were ſhewn to the author. Firſt; there appears to him, whilſt in a trance (εγενομην εν πνευματι)[d] One, in human form, ſurrounded with ſeven

[d] Chap. i. 10. Comp. chap. iv. 2.

candleſticks,

candleſticks, clad in a long robe, and girt with a golden girdle; his head and hair were white as wool, or as ſnow, and his eyes like flames of fire; his feet like molten metal, and his voice like the noiſe of a rapid torrent; in his right hand he held ſeven ſtars, from his mouth went a ſharp two-edged ſword, and his countenance ſhone like the ſun in its meridian ſplendor. This Being dictates to him Epiſtles to the preſidents of the ſeven Chriſtian communities in Aſia. Theſe ſeven epiſtles contain many forcible exhortations to zeal in virtue or brotherly-love, and powerful conſolations, eſpecially for the martyrs to this virtue. But they are compoſed almoſt entirely from paſſages of the Old Teſtament and the Goſpels.

Afterwards, (ſecond viſion)* the author falls into another trance; and ſees the Almighty on a majeſtic throne,

* Chap. iv—xix.

holding

holding in his hands a book with ſeven ſeals; and Chriſt, in the form of a Lamb with ſeven horns and ſeven eyes, who is alone capable of taking this book from the hands of God, and of opening its ſeals[f].—He opens the firſt ſeal, and the Conqueror appears[g]: he opens the ſecond, and War comes on the earth[h]: the third, and Famine diſplays itſelf[i]: the fourth is opened, and immediately come forth Death and the Grave[k]. After opening the fifth ſeal, thoſe who had been innocently ſlain call for revenge[l]: when the ſixth is opened, frightful appearances are ſeen, and all things tremble[m]. But theſe plagues are only the forerunners of the terrible calamity which ſucceeds on the opening of the ſeventh ſeal. Wherefore, be-

[f] Chap. iv. v.
[g] Chap. vi. 1, 2.
[h] Chap. vi. 3, 4.
[i] Chap. vi. 5, 6.
[k] Chap. vi. 7, 8.
[l] Chap. vi. 9, 10.
[m] Chap. vi. 12—17.

fore

fore this circumſtance takes place, the ſervants of God, who are deſtined to eſcape this dreadful calamity, are marked by an angel on the forehead; an hundred and forty-four thouſand, twelve thouſand from each of the twelve tribes of Iſrael. The writer now beheld an innumerable multitude out of every nation ſtanding before the throne and the Lamb, in white garments, with palms in their hands, and crying with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God who ſitteth on the throne! and unto the Lamb!" Theſe were come out of great tribulation, and had waſhed and purified their garments in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they ſtand before the throne of God, ſerve him day and night in his temple, and He who ſitteth on the throne covereth them as with a pavillion; they no more hunger nor thirſt; neither the ſun nor any other heat incommodes them; they are paſtured by the

the Lamb, who conducts them to the fountains of life, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes. After this Epiſode [n] follows—the opening of the ſeventh ſeal. And, lo!

Seven angels with ſeven trumpets appear [o]. The ſighs of the ſaints reſound before the throne of God; immediately theſe ſeven angels make themſelves ready. The firſt ſounds; and inſtantly hail and fire mixed with blood, fall on the earth. The other angels ſound ſucceſſively;—and a great mountain as it were burning with fire is caſt into the ſea, the third part of the ſea becomes bitter, and a third part of the creatures therein die: a ſtar, named Wormwood, falls from heaven [p]: the third part of the ſun, of the moon, and of the ſtars is darkened [q]: a ſtar falls from heaven, and to him is given the key of the bottom-

[n] Chap. vii.
[o] Chap. viii—xiv.
[p] Chap. viii. 10, 11.
[q] Chap. viii. 12.

leſs

leſs pit, which he opens[r]; the four angels, which were bound by the river Euphrates, are looſed[s]: a woman, clothed with the ſun, and having the moon under her feet, is in travail, and is delivered, &c.—At laſt the ſeventh trumpet ſounds; and now are made various great and terrible preparations (in the long epiſode, Chap. x—xiv). An angel commands St. John to write down every thing he beheld; another gives him a book to ſwallow, &c. A woman in particular appears, clothed with the ſun, and having the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve ſtars. She is in travail. And, behold! a great red dragon, with ſeven heads and ten horns, and ſeven crowns upon his heads; whoſe tail drew away the third part of the ſtars of heaven, and caſt them on the earth. It placed itſelf before the woman in order to devour her child.

[r] Chap. ix. 1, 2. [s] Chap. ix. 14.

But

But ſhe brought forth a ſon who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. The woman then fled into the wilderneſs. But in heaven commences a war. Michael and his angels fought againſt the dragon, who is Satan, and his angels. Michael conquers, and the dragon is caſt on the earth. Now two frightful beaſts aroſe againſt the woman, her ſon, and their followers. The firſt, extremely hideous, was like a leopard, his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion. The other had two horns as of a lamb; his number was ſix hundred three ſcore and ſix, &c. Afterwards the author ſaw a white cloud, and upon it ſat He, in human form[t], with a golden crown on his head, and a ſharp ſickle in his hand[u]. There ariſes a great commotion in heaven. And then appear

[t] See above, p. 186.

[u] Chap. xiv. 14, and following verſes.

Seven

Seven angels with ſeven vials full of the wrath of God*, which are poured out ſucceſſively; almoſt in the ſame manner and with the ſame effects as happened before, when the ſeven trumpets were ſounded. After all the ſeven had been poured out, there appeared a woman, ſitting on a beaſt; clothed in purple and ſcarlet, and adorned with gold, precious ſtones, and pearls; in her hand ſhe held a golden cup full of abominations, and the filthineſs of her fornications; and upon her forehead was her name thus written, 'Myſtery! Babylon the Great, the mother 'of harlots, and abominations of the 'earth!' Babylon the Great is deſtroyed; on which event heaven reſounds with ſongs of praiſe. And now He, who with his heavenly armies had cauſed the deſtruction of Babylon, returns to heaven.—This ſection is almoſt entirely compoſed of images and ex-

* Chap. xv—xix.

preſſions from Iſaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

Again (third viſion[z]), an angel came down from heaven, who had the key of the bottomleſs pit, and a great chain. He laid hold on the dragon, who is Satan, and bound him. Thus bound, he caſt him into the bottomleſs pit, where he was to remain a thouſand years; and after that be looſed again for a ſhort time. Thrones appear; and they to whom a power of judgment is committed, ſeated themſelves thereon. The ſouls of thoſe who had been ſlain on account of the doctrine of Jeſus revived, and ruled with Chriſt a thouſand years. But the reſt of the dead did not live again until the thouſand years had expired. This was the firſt reſurrection. After the expiration of the thouſand years, Satan will be looſed from his impriſonment, and

[z] Chap. xx.—end of the book.

ſeduce

ſeduce the nations which are in the four ends of the earth.—Then he beheld a white throne, and He ſat thereon from whoſe look earth and heaven fled. The dead, great and ſmall, ſtand before the throne; books are opened, according to which they are to be judged. One book, in particular, is opened [y], the book of life; and whoever was not found written therein was caſt into the lake of fire, together with Death and the Grave.—Now appeared to him a new heaven, and a new earth. And he beheld the holy city, the new Jeruſalem, come down out of heaven from God: its wall was of jaſper; the city itſelf, pure gold; each of its twelve foundations was a precious ſtone, jaſper, ſapphire, &c.; each of its twelve gates a pearl [z]; and the ſtreets of gold.

[y] Chap. xx. 12, and following verſes.

[z] ὁ Μαργαριτης means in the Chaldee not only a *pearl*, but likewiſe a *precious ſtone*; ſee Buxtorf lex. talmud. in v. But here it is expreſsly diſtinguiſhed from the precious ſtones, λιθῳ τιμιῳ, chap. xxi. 21. comp. ver. 19, 20.

But no temple was there; for God and the Lamb are its temple[a].—The groundwork of the imagery here alſo is taken chiefly from Iſaiah and Ezekiel; but the poetical dreſs in which it is clad, the precious ſtones, pearls, &c. is the author's own production.

The book concludes with this aſſertion, "I teſtify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man ſhall add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which teſtifieth theſe things ſaith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even ſo, Come Lord Jeſus."

[a] Chap. xxi. 22, and following verſes.

SECT.

SECT. II.

The Interpretation of the Book of Revelation.

NEVER did a book exiſt on whoſe contents ſuch different opinions have been formed. In the earlier times of Chriſtianity, when its followers were perſecuted by the Roman Emperours, the Revelation was conſidered as a prophecy of the ſpeedy deſtruction of Gentile Rome. Irenæus[b] thought that the number 'ſix hundred three ſcore and ſix[c]' indicated ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ. How it was underſtood after Chriſtianity itſelf had aſcended the imperial throne in the perſon of Conſtantine, is unknown. But when the Romiſh Biſhops had erected the horrid

[b] Adverſ. hæreſ. v. 26. 30.
[c] See above, p. 192.

ſyſtem of papal tyranny[d], and tormented and murdered all that oppoſed it.

[d] In the ſixth century the biſhops of Rome made pretenſions to the ſovereignty over the whole world, as a right beſtowed upon them by God, from being, as they aſſerted, the ſucceſſors of St. Peter, and the vicars of Chriſt. In the eighth, from the grants of Pepin and Charlemagne, they became temporal lords. In the ninth, they placed themſelves on an equality with princes and emperours, and in ſome caſes claimed the ſuperiority; now it was that they publiſhed, if they did not forge, the Decretales, and Donatio Conſtantini Magni. The eleventh century brought this infamous uſurpation to its maturity. Hildebrand, a blackſmith's ſon, who, on being raiſed to the papal ſee, took the name of Gregory the Seventh, ſummoned the emperour Henry the Fourth to appear at Rome under the penalty of eccleſiaſtical cenſures; and on his not appearing, pronounced him excommunicated, and releaſed all his ſubjects from their oath of fidelity. The emperour was at length obliged to comply; but was not received again into the pale of the Church until he had ſtood barefoot and without nouriſhment during three days in the caſtle of Canoſſa, where the pope then reſided, and had humbly prayed for favour. Laſtly, ſince the thirteenth century, they exerciſed ſovereign authority over all the monarchs of the Weſt: pope Innocent the Third depoſed the emperour Otto the Fourth, and compelled John, king of England, to make

it, Joachim, an abbot in Calabria, during the thirteenth century, pointed the book againſt the Pope. The Franciſcans, on being oppreſſed by the papal ſee, followed him. Many of the Proteſtants eagerly embraced this opinion: and ſince that time it is become the ruling ſentiment among this claſs of Chriſtians. On the other hand, the Romiſh church has retaliated, and diſcovered in it Luther, Calvin, or ſome one or other of the reformers; nor have there been wanting men, who have fancied that they perceived alluſions even to Mahomet. Innumerable are the individual interpretations which have been given in modern times. The afflicted Proteſtants in Hungary and Bohemia, during the perſecutions which were excited againſt them in the ſeventeenth century, per-

make his kingdom tributary to the Romiſh ſee. See Mornæi Myſterium Iniquitatis; and Cyprian, Hiſtory of Popery.

ceived many prophecies therein which afforded them much consolation. Some imagine it to be a perfect history of the Christian church, from its commencement even to the end of the world.—Many learned men, and among these Luther and Calvin, have never attempted an exposition, because they considered it a fruitless labour. Others, lastly, (Wetstein and D'Aubitz in particular) have explained it as indicating the destruction of the Jewish state and divine-service. And if any interpretation has the slightest degree of light and probability, it is this[*].

SECT.

[*] I will here present the reader with the heads of this interpretation.—1. *Christ takes the book with seven seals from the hand of God*, chap. iv. v. 7, i. e. he is commissioned by God to destroy the state and divine worship of the Jews. 2. *Seven angels successively sound their trumpets*, chap. viii.—xiv. 7, i. e. terrible events precede the destruction. 3. *Seven vials filled with the wrath of God are poured out by seven angels*, chap. xv.—xix. 1, 4, that utter destruction is now carried into execution.

4. *Christ*

SECT. III.

Remarks on its Contents.

1. IT ſtands perfectly inſulated in the bible.—Even from the ſlighteſt peruſal, it will clearly appear, that this book is entirely different from all the other writings not only of the New Teſtament, but alſo of the Old. In the other books of the New Teſtament hiſtorical matters and doctrines are

4. *Chriſt comes again, the dead are raiſed, &c.* chap. xx.—xxii. i. e. after the coming of Chriſt to hold judgment on Jeruſalem, he will appear again in due time to judge the whole world.—In examining this *poetical* book, we muſt be governed by the ſame rules as we adopt when we endeavour to explain the work of any other poet—we muſt attribute a diſtinct meaning only to the principal images, and conſider all the other ſeparate features of the different images as merely poetical ornament and amplification. Agreeably to this, book, ſeal, ſeven ſeals, trumpets, ſeven trumpets, &c. have in themſelves no particular meaning, but are all nothing more than the poetical dreſs of the principal images.

delivered

delivered in the common language of men: there exiſts nothing of divine revelations ſhewn in a trance through figures, except in the paſſage of the Acts of the Apoſtles, x. 3—7; and even here the explanation is immediately ſubjoined[f]. The Prophets of the Old Teſtament indeed have delivered their doctrines frequently in viſions; their writings often contain thoſe of a ſimilar nature. But entire and mere viſion like this, without any ſubjoined explanation, exiſts in no book whatever of the bible, except in the Apocalypſe.

2. The author is a perſon called John; but whether the Apoſtle of that name or not, he does not inform us.—The writer calls himſelf repeatedly John, not only in the preface of the book[g], but frequently alſo in other

[f] In the 8th and following verſes.
[g] Chap. i. 1.

places

places [h] where it might have been by no means expected. He profeſſes himſelf a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt [i], and a teacher of his religion [k]; and aſſerts that he had been on the iſland of Patmos on account of the confeſſion of the doctrine of Jeſus [l]. But whether to preach it there, or baniſhed for having preached it, he does not diſcloſe. And here, in a trance, he ſaw theſe viſions. But he never ſuffers even a ſingle word to eſcape him by which we might be enabled to diſcover that he was the Apoſtle of the ſame name. He never, like the Evangeliſt, calls himſelf 'the diſciple whom Jeſus loved, who leaned on his boſom at ſupper [m].' Not a trace of the Apoſtle's favourite figures and expreſſions,

[h] Chap. i. 4. 9. xxii. 8.
[i] Chap. i. 4.
[k] Chap. i. 2.
[l] Chap. ii. 9.
[m] For inſtance, John xiii.

Light,

Light, Life, &c. is to be found here. —On the contrary, the frequent mention of his name is at perfect variance with the cuſtom of the Apoſtle, who never names himſelf either in his Goſpel or Epiſtles.

3. The book contains many fine paſſages.—Notwithſtanding its impenetrable obſcurity, we meet with ſome noble paſſages, diſtinguiſhed both for their matter and compoſition. Beſides what has been ſaid above concerning the ſeven epiſtles to the Chriſtian communities, we may add, that however ignorant we are to what the deſtruction in chap. vi. 12—17. alludes, the painting is very ſublime. Animated and affecting is the deſcription of the bliſs of the heroic workers of virtue, chap. vii. 9—17: and majeſtic is the account of the redemption of the human race through Jeſus, chap. xii. 7—12.

4. It is inexplicable, at leaſt at preſent.—Of what it treats; whether it be

be a narration or a prophecy; whether it relate to near circumſtances, or remote; whether it conſiſt of one whole, or of many unconnected parts; whether all of it, or nothing be already fulfilled; what may be the meaning of the myſterious numbers, 'a time, and times, and half a time[n]'; of the ſignificant number, 'ſix hundred, three ſcore and ſix[o];' the thouſand years[p], &c.; of the frightful beaſts and monſters[q]; in a word, of the entire contents—is moſt indeterminate and obſcure. After the inquiries and aſſertions of many centuries, we can aſcertain of its meaning—abſolutely nothing. We become confuſed and diſguſted when we dive into expoſitions ſo numerous, various, and contradictory. And the Revelation, after all that the learned and unlearned, fa-

[n] Chap. xii. 14.
[o] Cap. xiii. 18.
[p] Chap. xx. 4, and following verſes.
[q] See above, p. 192.

natics,

natics and men of ſound underſtanding, have ſaid and dreamt concerning it, ſtill remains—a ſealed book. This is the opinion of all, who, from modeſt diſtruſt of their own penetration, have conſulted, I will not ſay all the interpreters of this book—for that is abſolutely impoſſible—but even a moderate part of them. The late profeſſor Brucker, for inſtance, ſays in one of his works, 'that he had read a very conſiderable number of the expoſitors of this figurative and myſtical book, and found incredible contradictions and confuſion.'

5. Many things in it appear to be erroneous and unchriſtian.—For how ſhall we harmonize that joy and triumph with which the horrid puniſhment of their enemies was viewed and publiſhed by the ſaints, with the mild, conciliatory, charitable, and enemy-loving ſpirit, which exiſts in the whole New Teſtament, and particularly in the

the writings of St. John, which breathe, as it were, nothing but forgiveneſs and benevolence?—Again, the writer of this book offers at two different times to adore an angel, in the moſt exact ſenſe of the word, to adore as God. And that not only in the viſion[r], but alſo[s] in the uſual, natural condition of the mind. It is highly improbable that any thing of this kind would be done by a Jew, and yet more improbable by a Chriſtian, but abſolutely impoſſible by an Apoſtle, nay, by him, who was the moſt intimate friend of Jeſus!—We will paſs over the error, as it appears to be, which is met with, chap. xx. 8, where the town or kingdom Magog[t], (from Ezekiel xxxviii. 2,) is ſuppoſed to be a man; becauſe critics are ſtill in doubt as to

[r] Chap. xix. 9, 10.

[s] Chap. xxii. 8, 9.

[t] Magog, a city, or a kingdom; Gog, the prince of Magog.

the

the right interpretation of this paſſage of Ezekiel.—Alſo, in judging of this book, we cannot with propriety ſay any thing of its numerous grammatical errors, ſince our preſent text is extremely defective. And to this ſubject I will now proceed.

SECT. IV.

Of our common text of the Revelation.

OF this book, when compared with the other ſcriptures of the New Teſtament, very few manuſcripts and ancient verſions, and a very ſmall number of extracts in the works of the ancient teachers, are come down to us. About four manuſcripts only have any value; the reſt are new and worthleſs. Of theſe four there are but two complete. Until the time of Wetſtein, three manuſcripts alone had been collated; and ſince him very few, collated with ac-

curacy, have been added to the number. Eraſmus, who could make uſe of one Greek manuſcript only, tranſlated the greater part of it from the Vulgate; he even made many alterations purely conjectural. From this edition of Eraſmus, our common text of the Revelation of St. John is for the moſt part a copy. Deſtitute therefore of credible manuſcripts, verſions, and other writings of high antiquity, amidſt a multitude of omiſſions, tranſpoſitions, additions, and alterations, we cannot ſettle the genuine reading. The text of this book is conſequently uncertain, even in the beſt editions[a].

[a] See the Editions of the New Teſtament by Wetſtein and Griesbach; and Semler's Theologiſche Hermeneutik; IV. 264.

SECT. V.

The Opinion of Ancient Writers on this Book.

THE ſcarcity of critical aid, and, a neceſſary conſequence, the uncertainty of the text, will not aſtoniſh us, if we revert to antiquity, and inquire what opinion the ancients had of the Revelation. In the two firſt centuries this book was rejected by Chriſtian teachers of great reſpectability. Papias[w], even if he had not been, as Irenæus has aſſerted, a diſciple of St. John himſelf, was certainly a contemporary of this Apoſtle, and indeed Biſhop of Hierapolis, a town in the vicinity of Epheſus, the place of reſidence of the Apoſtle, and of the ſeven Aſiatic communities to which the Apocalypſe contains epiſtles. Now

[w] See above, p. 84.

this

this Father, whoſe evidence would be of ſuch great importance in the preſent inquiry, has not mentioned the Revelation: for Euſebius quotes nothing from him [x], which he certainly would not have omitted, had he been able, he himſelf being perfectly in doubt as to its authenticity. Indeed Papias overlooks in his works ſome other books of the New Teſtament. But he had not ſo much reaſon to notice other books as this, ſince he was the father of the doctrine of the Millennium (the opinion that Chriſt would reign upon earth a thouſand years after the reſurrection of the righteous), which doctrine has always been grounded by all its ſupporters on the Apocalypſe. Euſebius even ſays [y], "That Papias was deluded into the opinion of a Millennium from an uncertain tradition, and by miſunderſtanding the apoſ-

[x] See above, p. 85. [y] Hiſt. Eccl. iii. 39.

tolical narrations," (διηγησεις, conſe-quently not apoſtolical writings). There-fore he—either *did not know* of the *Apocalypſe*,—or *did not receive it* as an *apoſtolical* and *divine* ſcripture [z].

Caius [a], an orthodox and very learned preſbyter of the church of Rome, in the ſecond century, aſſerted even that Cerinthus, in order to eſtabliſh the coarſe doctrine of the Millennium, had falſely attributed it to the Apoſtle St. John. "Caius in his Diſputation ſays," (theſe are the words of Euſebius, E. H. III. 28, for of the writings of Caius none are now extant) "Cerinthus, by the help of revelations which he in-

[z] This is acknowledged by Dr. Storr, a very learned and acute defender of the authenticity and divinity of this book, in his 'New Apology for the Revelation of St. John,' p. 176 of the Original.—The teſtimony of Andrew, Biſhop of Cæſarea, in the ſixth century, of whom we know little or nothing, cannot be produced as a proof in oppoſition to Euſebius: it is moreover obſcure. See Dr. Storr, p. 175.

[a] See above, p. 150.

ſinuated

ſinuated to have been written by a great Apoſtle [b], impoſes upon us a variety of wonderful relations, which he pretends were ſhewn to him by angels [c], and aſſerts, that after the reſurrection, Chriſt's palace ſhall be on earth [d], and that the fleſh (men with carnal bodies) ſhall dwell again at Jeruſalem, and indulge in pleaſures and ſenſual appetites. This enemy of the divine ſcriptures ſays alſo, in order to deceive, (θελων πλανᾶν) that a thouſand years ſhall be ſpent in nuptial feaſts [e]." —The great Apoſtle, by whom the revelations are pretended to have been

[b] Δι' αποκαλυψεων ὡς ὑπο Αποστολω μεγαλω γεγραμμενων. Dionyſius of Alexandria alſo calls the book αποκαλυψις, in the plural. Euſebii Hiſtor. Eccleſ. VII. 25. p. 354. edit. Reading.

[c] Τερατολογιας ἡμιν, ὡς δι' Αγγελων αυτῳ δεδειγμενας ψευδομενῳ.

[d] The words in the original are, το βασιλειον, and not την βασιλειαν; it muſt not therefore be rendered, as is done by the Latin tranſlator, regnum Chriſti. The palace of Chriſt is the New Jeruſalem, chap. xx.

[e] αριθμω χιλιονταετιας εν γαμῳ ἑορτης γινεσθαι.

written; the wonderful things ſhewn to him by angels; the palace of Chriſt on earth, after the reſurrection, at Jeruſalem; the marriage feaſts; and the dominion which is to endure for a thouſand years, are viſibly taken from the Apocalypſe. One of the moſt eloquent defenders of its authenticity confeſſes himſelf, that Caius ſpeaks of this book, and not of any other work, as that which Cerinthus had written under the title, αποκαλυψις[f]. This becomes ſtill more certain, as Dionyſius of Alexandria expreſsly ſays[g], that ſome of the ancients had attributed the book to Cerinthus.

It is this Dionyſius who excites in every reflecting and impartial reader the greateſt doubt concerning the authenticity of the Apocalypſe. He was born at Alexandria, of Gentile pa-

[f] See Dr. Storr, New Apology for the Revelation of St. John.

[g] Euſebius, H. E. VII. 25.

rents,

rents, his extenſive reading led him to Chriſtianity, he became the diſciple of Origen, then a preſbyter, and laſtly, about the year 248, Biſhop of the Chriſtian community in his native city. His deep penetration and great knowledge of the world, united with the moſt amiable character, placed him in a condition to do what no one ever has done either before or after him. He held a religious controverſy with the followers of Nepos (an Egyptian Biſhop then lately deceaſed, who had taught the Millennarian doctrine), which not only produced no bad conſequences, but, on the contrary, convinced his opponents, and inclined them to abandon their error[h]. It is evident from his writings, of which, except two, only fragments preſerved in Euſebius are come down to us, and from his life which the ſame hiſ-

[h] Euſebius Hiſt. Eccleſ. VII. 24.

torian relates[1], that he was a man of diſtinguiſhed talents, very extenſive learning, ſound judgment, and what is of the greateſt importance, of moſt excellent character. His amiable modeſty and meekneſs in particular won the hearts of all who knew him intimately; his learning and penetration, united with a fine eloquence, gave him ſuch conſequence, that it was cuſtomary to chooſe him umpire in almoſt all diſputes; and by poſterity he has been named the Great Dionyſius. — Againſt the fore-mentioned Nepos (who underſtood the paſſages concerning the coming of Chriſt, eſpecially thoſe in the Apocalypſe, literally; and in a particular book which he wrote, 'A Confutation of the Alle-' goriſts' ελεγχος αλληγορισων, founded on this hypotheſis the coarſe doctrine of the Millennium), he compoſed a

[1] Hiſt. Eccleſ. VI. 29. 35. 40. 42—44. 46. VII. 1. 4—11. 20—28.

work, 'Concerning the promiſes,' περὶ ἐπαγγελιῶν, in two books. In the ſecond, he treats at large of the Apocalypſe. The extracts which Euſebius* gives from it, are worthy of being introduced here, for they contain not only much important information and ſound criticiſm on the Revelation; but afford us alſo a good idea of the learning and mode of thinking of its author, and of the care with which the primitive Chriſtians were accuſtomed to ſcrutinize the writings which made any pretenſions to be apoſtolical. "Some of the Ancients" (ſays Dionyſius) "have entirely rejected this "book; refuted it ſection by ſection; "ſhewing it to be throughout unin- "telligible and inconſiſtent. They af- "ſert alſo, that the title is falſe, ſince "this is neither a work of St. John, "nor even a Revelation (ἀποκαλυψις),

* Hiſt. Eccleſ. VII. 25.

"becauſe

" becauſe every thing in it is hidden
" under a coarſe and thick veil. They
" ſuppoſe, that not only no Apoſtle,
" but no pious member of the church,
" was its author; but aſcribe it to
" Cerinthus, and the ſects called after
" his name, who were deſirous of
" giving credit to his errors, by affixing
" to them a reſpectable name. For
" from him originated the doctrine,
" that the kingdom of Chriſt ſhould
" be temporal, conſiſting of thoſe
" things to which he himſelf, a totally
" ſenſual and carnal man, was moſt
" addicted; viz. the ſatiating of the
" belly, and the gratification of fleſhly
" luſts, by eating, drinking, marrying,
" by feaſts and feaſt-offerings. But I
" will not venture *to reject the book*,
" ſince many of the brethren highly
" eſteem it[1]; for I believe that its
" contents

[1] Dionyſius appeals here, 1ſt, to the teſtimony of ſome of the ancients, τινες των προ ημων; and 2dly, to that

" contents ſurpaſs my comprehenſion,
" are concealed and wonderful. Al-
" though I do not underſtand it, yet I
" ſuppoſe that the words have a cer-
" tain hidden meaning. I do not
" meaſure and judge of it *by my own*
" *reaſon*, but *follow the faith*, and
" conſider it above my intellect. I do
" not reject what I do not compre-
" hend, but admire it the more, be-
" cauſe I do not underſtand it[m]."

' After

that of many of his cotemporaries, " many of them," ſays he, " highly eſteem it:"—conſequently, not all. It is difficult therefore to ſay, with Dr. Storr, (New Apology for the Revelation of St. John, p. 50, of the original), that Dionyſius only diſputes and conjectures, but does not appeal to hiſtorical arguments.

[m] The various turns which the author here takes; the indeterminate, obſcure aſſertions, which he makes; and the expreſs appeal to the brethren, who highly eſteem the Apocalypſe; ſhew, as it appears to me, clearly, that, in this place, he delivers, from tenderneſs to thoſe of different ſentiments, not his whole opinion. ' On the contents of the book he neither could nor would decide, ſince he underſtood nothing of it:' this, I believe, is the ſenſe of this prolix paſſage. What immediately

'After this (continues Euſebius) he examines the whole work, ſhews that according to the common uſe of language it is impoſſible to underſtand it (αδυνατον αυτην κατα την προχειρον νοεισθαι διανοιαν), and then adds, "After having "ended what is called the prophecy, "the prophet pronounces thoſe bleſſed "who keep it, 'and alſo himſelf— "*Bleſſed is he, who keepeth the ſayings* "*of the prophecy of this book; and I* "*John, who ſaw and heard theſe* "*things.* That he therefore was "called John, and that this book "came from a certain John, I will not "deny; I even confeſs that it was "written by *ſome holy man*, and *by* "*divine inſpiration*, αγιε τινος και "θεοπνευςε συναινω. Nevertheleſs I can- "not eaſily acknowledge, that this "John was *the Apoſtle*, the *ſon of* "*Zebedee*, the *brother of James*, whoſe

mediately follows will hardly permit us to entertain a doubt on the ſubject.

"*name*

" *name is affixed to the Goſpel and*
" *Catholic Epiſtle.* For I conclude[a]
" from the deſign and ſtyle of the dif-
" ferent works, and from what is called
" the arrangement of the book (ἐκ τῆς
" τῶν βιβλίων διαξεύξεως λεγομένης), that they
" were not from one and the ſame
" perſon. For the Evangeliſt never
" introduces his name, or makes him-
" ſelf known either in the Goſpel or
" in the Epiſtle."—' In the ſequel'
(adds Euſebius) he proceeds in this
manner, " St. John no where ſpeaks
" of himſelf, either directly, or as of a
" third perſon. On the contrary, the
" author of the Apocalypſe places his
" name at the very beginning. *The*
" *Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which*
" *God gave unto him, to ſhew unto his*
" *ſervants things which muſt ſhortly*

[a] Theſe internal reaſons determine the deciſion of Dionyſius; the former opinions and evidences of antiquity having left him in doubt. The τεκμαιρομαι ἐκ, κ. τ. λ., do not entirely exclude hiſtorical reaſons alſo.

" *come*

" *come to paſs*; *and he ſent and ſig-*
" *nified it by his angel unto his ſervant*
" *John, who bare record of the word*
" *of God, and of the teſtimony of*
" *Jeſus Chriſt, and of all things that*
" *he ſaw.* In the epiſtle at the com-
" mencement of this book, he begins,
" *John to the ſeven churches which*
" *are in Aſia; grace be unto you and*
" *peace.* But the Evangeliſt has not pre-
" fixed his name to the catholic Epiſtle;
" on the contrary, he begins without cir-
" cumlocution, concerning the myſtery
" of the divine revelation, *That which*
" *was from the beginning, which we*
" *have heard, which we have ſeen with*
" *our eyes,* &c. And for the like re-
" velation the Lord pronounced Peter
" bleſſed; ſaying, *Bleſſed art thou*
" *Simon, Son of Jonas, for fleſh and*
" *blood have not revealed it unto you,*
" *but my father who is in heaven.*
" Nor in the ſecond or third Epiſtles
" attributed to him, though indeed they

" are

" are ſhort epiſtles, is the name of " John prefixed, but only the title of " the Elder. But this other man (the " author of the Apocalypſe) was not " contented with naming himſelf once, " but repeats it often, *I John, &c.*; " and at the end he ſays, *Bleſſed is he* " *that keepeth the ſayings of the pro-* " *phecy of this book; and I John,* " *who ſaw theſe things and heard* " *them.* Therefore that a perſon " named John was the author of this " book ought to be credited. But who " he was is uncertain. For he neither " ſays, agreeably to the language of " the Goſpel, that he is the Diſciple " whom the Lord loved; nor He, who " leaned on his breaſt; nor, The bro- " ther of James; nor, He who had " himſelf ſeen and heard the Lord. " Whereas he would have introduced " ſome expreſſions of this kind, if he " had intended that we ſhould know " who was the writer. But this is

not

" not the caſe.—Now many writers " called John, I believe, have ex- " iſted. ——— Alſo it is probable " from the ſentiments, and words, and " their conſtruction, that this man (the " author of the Apocalypſe) was a " different perſon from him (the " Apoſtle). For the Goſpel and " Epiſtle have a certain ſimilarity; " they begin in the ſame manner; the " former ſays, *In the beginning was* " *the word*; and the latter, *That which* " *was from the beginning*; the former " ſays, *And the word was made fleſh* " *and dwelt among us, and we beheld* " *his glory, a glory as of the only* " *begotten of the Father;* and the lat- " ter the very ſame, with this trifling " variation, *Which we have heard, which* " *we have ſeen, and our hands have* " *handled of the word of life.* —— " Again, we find in both much of " Life; Light; Avoiding of darkneſs; " Truth; Grace, Joy, the Fleſh and the " Blood

" blood of the Lord; Judgment, For-
" giveneſs of ſins, The love of God to-
" wards us, The command of love one
" towards another; The neceſſity of
" keeping all the commandments; The
" judgment of the world, of the Devil,
" of Antichriſt; The promiſe of the
" Holy-Ghoſt; The adoption of God;
" Unlimitted faith; The Father and the
" Son. — — But the ſtyle of the Apo-
" calypſe is very different from this,
" it is diſſimilar in almoſt every point.
" —Further, the Apocalypſe neither
" mentions the Epiſtle, nor the Epiſtle
" the Apocalypſe.—The Language alſo
" of the Goſpel and Epiſtle is very
" different from that of the Apoca-
" lypſe. For the Greek of the former
" is not only void of grammatical
" errors, but there is an elegance in
" the expreſſions, the argument, and
" contexture of the diſcourſe; and we
" do not diſcover either a barbariſm,
" a ſoleciſm, or even an idiomatical

" expreſſion.—As to the other, he who " ſaw the Apocalypſe, may perhaps " have received wiſdom and prophecy; " but the language is not good Greek, " it is mixed with barbariſms and " ſometimes with ſoleciſms. Theſe I " will not at preſent quote, as it is not " my intention to ridicule, but to ſhew " the diſſimilarity of the writings*." ——— Here then we have moſt important information concerning the Apocalypſe. A ſcholar of high antiquity, who lived ſomewhat more than a hundred years after the Apoſtle St. John, and was then in high eſtimation for his knowledge and character; who has been in repute with all antiquity, and continues from the very fragments of his writings to obtain the reſpect of poſterity;—this conſcientious and learned

* This criticiſm of the language is ſomewhat over-ſtrained. Neither is that of the Goſpel and Epiſtle ſo pure, nor that of the Apocalypſe ſo corrupt, as Dionyſius has here repreſented it.

inquirer

inquirer was induced to doubt by the '*teſtimony of ſome of the ancients,*' who conſidered this book not only as not apoſtolical, but even as worthleſs and erroneous. Notwithſtanding, he would not abſolutely reject it, ſince many of his contemporaries continued to eſteem it: on the contrary, he confeſſed that it was a holy book, and inſpired by God. He acknowledged this more from reſpect to the ſupporters of the Apocalypſe, than from his own conviction; for its contents were to him obſcure and incomprehenſible. But thus much he aſſerted with confidence, that it was not written by the Apoſtle St. John, but by ſome other perſon of the ſame name: for the ſtyle and contents of the book prove it incontrovertibly.

The father of Chriſtian eccleſiaſtical hiſtory repreſents the opinion *of antiquity* concerning the Apocalypſe exactly in a ſimilar manner, but more

determinately and clearly [p]. "Of the "Revelation," ſays he [q], "*the majority* "are even yet" (after all the inquiries that had been then made) "ſtill in "doubt;" that is, they reſerved to themſelves all deciſive opinion on it, ſince they knew not whether they ſhould conſider the book as genuine or ſpurious. "Therefore," ſays he [r], "he "who chooſes, may place the Apoca- "lypſe among the Homologoumena" (the univerſally acknowledged). For at that time the book had many zealous ſupporters [s], who aſſerted its authenticity to be incontrovertible. Euſebius would not deprive thoſe perſons of their opinion, but nevertheleſs reminds them, that it was contradictory to hiſtory, for *ſome* of the ancients had actually pronounced it *ſpurious*. (ετι τε

[p] Hiſt. Eccleſ. III. 24, 25, and 39.
[q] III. 24. p. 118. Reading.
[r] III. 25. p. 119.
[s] See above, p. 159.

η Ιωαννη αποκαλυψις, ει φανειη, την τινες ως εφην αθετησιν, ετεροι δε εγκρινασι τοις ομολογημενοις.)

Such are the evidences againſt the authenticity of this book, with which its divinity is inſeparably connected[t]. On the other ſide, it is ſupported by men of equal conſequence. Juſtin Martyr[u], in the paſſage quoted above, to prove the doctrine of a Millennium, appeals to the Revelation of St. John the Apoſtle. Irenæus, who lived ſo near the time of the Apoſtles, and was alſo the ſcholar of Polycarp who had heard St. John himſelf[w], not only proves[x] the approaching deſtruction of the Roman monarchy, the wickedneſs of

[t] One of the moſt moderate and impartial opponents of the authenticity of the Revelation of St. John is Michaelis, in his Introduction to the New Teſtament. See the very learned and very accurate Mr. Marſh's tranſ. vol. iv. p. 461.

[u] See above, p. 103.

[w] See above, p. 112.

[x] Adverſ. Hæreſ. V. 26—end.

Antichriſt, and the doctrine of a Millennium, from the Apocalypſe, but alſo expreſsly aſſerts, that it was written almoſt in his (Irenæus's) own time, by St. John the Apoſtle; and appeals to manuſcripts of this book, which were ancient and might be relied on, and which he had ſeen[y]. Theophilus of Antioch[z], in one of his works now loſt, had refuted erroneous doctrines by authorities from the Revelation of St. John; conſequently, he thought it of divine inſpiration. Clement of Alexandria[a] likewiſe places it among the genuine and divine Scriptures. Tertullian[b], in proof of its divinity,

y We cannot place Melito (ſee above, p. 138) among the evidences, for we only know, that he had written a book on the Revelation of John. See above, p. 139. But what the tenor of his book was; whether he held this John to be the Apoſtle, or ſome indifferent perſon; or, whether he received or rejected the book; we know not.

z See above, 143.

a See above, 125.

b See above, 132.

appeals

appeals to the evidence of the communities eſtabliſhed by the Apoſtles themſelves. And an authority of the greateſt weight, Origen[c], the moſt learned of all the Chriſtian teachers; who had ſcrutinized the New Teſtament on true principles of criticiſm; and who was an enemy to the doctrine of a Millennium, he places the Revelation more than once among the writings of St. John the Apoſtle, and among the divine books of the New Teſtament[d]. Jerom, the moſt learned of the Latin Fathers, is of the ſame opinion. He ſtates[e] that in his time, the latter part

[c] See above, p. 155 f.

[d] He appears to aſſert even, that not *a ſingle one of* the ancients had doubted its genuineneſs. (See above, p. 160. Note 1). But among the ancients, and eſpecially among the fathers, we muſt not expect perfect logical preciſion; conſequently, we muſt not take the expreſſion of Origen in its ſtrict ſenſe. If this were actually his meaning, he was without doubt in an error, as is proved by the information of Dyonyſius and Euſebius.

[e] Ep. ad Dardanum.

of the fourth century, the Greek church rejected indeed this book, which was received by the Latin; but that he nevertheleſs eſteemed it divine, becauſe he relied rather on the credit of antiquity than on the cuſtom of the times. Now as the Romiſh church even then (and ſtill more ſince the ſixth century), had begun to be conſidered the oracle of Chriſtians, from that time therefore until the Reformation, the divinity of the Apocalypſe has ſcarcely ever been further called in queſtion [f].

[f] See Lardner's Supplement, vol. iii. p. 356—364. of the firſt edition.—As well in reſpect of learning, as alſo of impartiality, the late Chancellor Reuſs of Tubingen, and his ſon in-law, Dr. Storr, are among the moſt conſiderable defenders of the Apocalypſe: the former, in his 'Defence of the Revelation of St. John, in anſwer to the objections of Dr. Semler,' 1772, 8vo.; and the latter, in the 'New Apology for the Revelation of St. John,' Tubingen, 1783, in 8vo.—The hiſtory of the modern controverſies on this ſubject may be ſeen in Walch's 'Lateſt Hiſtory of Religion,' Part vii. p. 257, and following pages of the original.

SECT.

SECT. V.

The true Value and Credit of the Book.

THE foregoing obſervations on its contents and hiſtory, lead us to the following deciſion on the book of Revelation.—It is undoubtedly very old; it was known as early as the beginning of the ſecond century after Chriſt. But, it may be aſked, what led ſo many and creditable men to receive it as an apoſtolical and divine Scripture? To this it may be anſwered, that its author was called John; and this, as appears probable, was the cauſe of its having been placed by theſe men among the divine Scriptures of the New Teſtament; they miſtook him for the Apoſtle of the ſame name. Who he was, and where he lived, we know not: but the contents of the book clearly evince that he was a Chriſtian teacher and a pious

pious man. It contains alſo many paſſages diſtinguiſhed both for matter and compoſition; it has always been, and will always continue to be read by many with real advantage, as an excitement to virtue, and as affording means of conſolation. But as we neither underſtand its contents, nor can depend with certainty on the preſent text as genuine, the uſe of it is only ſo far ſafe, as its contents agree with the other writings of the New Teſtament. Whether, laſtly, the book was written by the *Apoſtle St. John*, or even by *any Apoſtle*, cannot be poſitively either aſſerted or denied.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Concluſions drawn from the above-mentioned Teſtimonies.

AFTER having heard ſo many clear and weighty teſtimonies of antiquity, how is it poſſible for any intelligent and impartial man to aſſert, 'that the preſent Scriptures of the New Teſtament were not declared to be genuine and divine before the Council of Laodicea, which was held about the year 364?' The enemies of Chriſtianity,—for theſe only make the aſſertion,—would conſequently wiſh to inſinuate to the world, that before the fourth century Chriſtians were entirely divided in their opinions concerning the genuine Scriptures of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, and that at one time more, at another, fewer books were received under this title, until at length the deciſive

ciſive ſentence of the Council of Laodicea eſtabliſhed the preſent Canon. The author of the 'Dictionnaire philoſophique portatif' has lately brought this ſtory again into notice. But if our adverſaries would caſt only a ſlight glance over the writings of the abovementioned teachers of the firſt two centuries and a half, they would undoubtedly bluſh at their own ignorance and boldneſs.—Juſtin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, prove their tenets by authorities taken from theſe ſcriptures; and indeed from theſe *only*, rejecting all others as either forged, or merely human compoſitions. Many teachers of the firſt and ſecond centuries mention a *collection* of the evangelical and apoſtolical writings as already exiſting. *All* the ancient writers whom Euſebius has cited, pronounce either unanimouſly or with a great majority of voices, theſe writings and *only* theſe,

to

to have been genuine works of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles. Notwithſtanding theſe circumſtances, it is pretended that the firſt centuries were quite undecided and uncertain on this ſubject! Notwithſtanding theſe circumcumſtances, it is aſſerted, that the Council of Laodicea firſt eſtabliſhed our preſent Canon[g]!

All the Scriptures of our New Teſtament, it is confeſſed, have not been received with *univerſal* conſent as genuine works of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles[h]. But that man muſt have predetermined to oppoſe the moſt palpable truths, and muſt reject all hiſtory, who will not confeſs, that the *greater part* of the New Teſtament has been *univerſally* received as authentic, and that the remaining books have been acknowledged as ſuch by

[g] This Canon of the Council is moreover ſpurious. See Prof. Spittler on this ſubject.

[h] See above, p. 170.

the majority of the ancients; and, therefore, that *all our preſent books of the New Teſtament* (the Apocalypſe perhaps excepted) have ſtronger proofs for their authenticity, than can be produced for any of the other writings of antiquity, for thoſe of Xenophon, Polybius, Tacitus, or Cicero, which nevertheleſs are received as genuine with ſuch confidence, that the whole world pronounced Hardouin inſane, when he attempted to call their authenticity in queſtion.—For, in the preſent caſe, we have not merely a ſingle ſolitary witneſs or two, but a great variety. They name theſe ſcriptures not ſimply in a caſual way, but relate their *hiſtory*, and make long *extracts* from them. Theſe witneſſes are men, who were intimately acquainted either with the *Evangeliſts* and *Apoſtles themſelves*, or their *immediate* diſciples; and lived at fartheſt not later than about *two generations* after their times. They were

were very well verſed in every kind of profane literature; they were *philoſophers* and *ſcholars*, who had formed their taſte, and ſharpened their judgment by the ſtudy of the beſt writers of antiquity, of Homer, Euripides, Æſchylus, Plato, and Ariſtotle; they were ſcholars, who had read with attention all the works of the Chriſtian authors; who were alſo familiar with the *apocryphal writings* (of which, in the firſt century, exiſted but few [1]), and after

[1] Even here the enemies of Chriſtianity betray themſelves. They confound all together; and miſtake writings forged in much later times for works which were in circulation ſoon after the times of the Apoſtles under their names. Out of a ſingle book, with different titles, they make many books. And through theſe effects of ignorance or diſhoneſty, the number of apochryphal works is magnified in ſuch an amazing degree, that John Tolland in his Amyntor has filled many pages only with the bare names of them. This error has been moſt amply refuted by Mr. Jeremiah Jones, in his 'New and full method of ſettling the canonical authority of the New Teſtament,' London, 1726, 3 vol. 8vo. in which he goes through each of theſe

after accurate ſcrutiny, rejected them. They alſo *doubted* of the truth of *ſome* of the books of our New Teſtament, and thereby eſtabliſhed an evident proof that they were by no means credulous. Some of them travelled in perſon purpoſely to examine into the truth of the books, which made pretenſions to divine inſpiration, received accurate information on this point from the communities planted by the Apoſtles themſelves, and in their con-

theſe apochryphal works ſeparately, and proves that the ancients rejected them as ſpurious, and pronounced the Scriptures of our New Teſtament excluſively to be the genuine works of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles. And this is alſo teſtified by Euſebius (Hiſt. Eccleſ. Lib. III. cap. 25) from his own knowledge of the earlieſt writings.—The major part of theſe apochryphal works were written in the fourth century. They all agree in eſſential matters with our New Teſtament; but they contain alſo a variety of fables. See theſe writings in Jo. Alb. Fabricii Cod. Apocr. N. T. vol. iii. in 8vo. Compa. Beauſobre Hiſt. du Manichée, Vol. ii. and Lardner's Credibility of the G. H. Part II. vol. xii. p. 157—174. firſt edition.

troverſies

troverſies with the heretics appealed to them with confidence [k].

[k] Lardner deſerves the greateſt credit for his labours on the proof of the authenticity of the New Teſtament. In the ſecond part of his 'Credibility of the Goſpel Hiſtory,' (which was originally publiſhed in 12 vol. 8vo.) and in the 'Supplement' (in 3 vol.) he has collected the evidences of the Chriſtian authors in a chronological order according to the centuries.

BOOK III.

THE UNCORRUPTED PRESERVATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAP. I.

The Books extant at preſent in the New Teſtament, are the ſame Writings which were originally compoſed by the Authors whoſe Names they bear.

BUT, it may perhaps be ſaid, have not thoſe books been long ago deſtroyed? Are not theſe which we have at preſent in the New Teſtament ſome of the writings which, in the early ages of Chriſtianity, were falſely aſcribed to the immediate diſciples of Jeſus? Or, how can we be aſſured, whether they are not ſo changed by latter *interpolations* and *eraſures*, as to have become entirely

different from the originals?—It is therefore neceſſary to ſhew, that theſe writings have deſcended to us unaltered, or, in other words, the uncorrupted preſervation of our preſent New Teſtament.—And this I ſhall prove

I. *From their Contents.*

AS early as the two firſt centuries of the Chriſtian era, we find the very ſame *facts* and the very ſame *doctrines* univerſally received by the Chriſtians, which we, of the preſent day, believe on the credit of the New Teſtament.—That Jeſus was born under the Roman emperour Auguſtus, and taught in the Jewiſh territory; that he publicly performed many and great miracles; was perſecuted by his enemies the Jews, though innocent, even to death on the croſs; and aroſe alive from the grave on the third day after his death; that a belief in this Jeſus and his doctrine

is

is the only way to ſalvation for all thoſe to whom they have been promulgated; that this ſame Jeſus has publiſhed and ordained for his diſciples the wiſeſt and moſt ſalutary precepts in reſpect of our conduct towards God, towards ourſelves, and towards our neighbour; that hereafter he will deſcend glorioufly from heaven, into which he viſibly aſcended, in order to awaken the dead, and to judge the whole race of mankind:—all this is aſſerted in all the earlieſt writings of Chriſtian antiquity[l] to have been the univerſal belief of Chriſtians[m].—And

[l] See above, Part I. Book II. Ch. i—iii.

[m] It is only neceſſary to read, for inſtance, the 19th and 20th ch. of Irenæus's fifth book Adverſus hæreſes, where he gives a ſhort ſketch of the Chriſtian doctrine as it then exiſted.—The principal writings on this ſubject are, Dionyſii Petravii Dogmata Theologica; Jacob Baſnage Hiſtoire de l'Eliſe; Lardner L. cit.; and Dr. Semler's Collections from the writings of the old teachers, which he has prefixed to Baumgarten's Dogmatic and Polemic.

all this likewiſe is contained in thoſe books which we now poſſeſs under the names of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles.

II.—*Becauſe an univerſal corruption of theſe writings was impoſſible; nor can the leaſt veſtige of ſuch a corruption be found in hiſtory.*

THAT theſe books ſhould be univerſally corrupted was totally impoſſible from the very ſtate of Chriſtianity. —The Chriſtian religion, even in the firſt century, was ſpread through every part of the known world. From the perſecutions which then took place, the diſtinct communities exiſting at Jeruſalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and in many other conſiderable cities, had little or no external connection with each other. As early as the firſt century aroſe Heretics, whoſe tenets were refuted by the Orthodox in their writings. Chriſtians, even of no rank or conſequence, were in poſſeſſion of many

many copies of theſe books, which were reverenced and read with the greateſt attention[a]. During the two firſt centuries no ſecret was made of any one relation or doctrine of the holy ſcriptures. On the contrary, Juſtin Martyr, Tertullian, Irenæus, appeal to the facility which every one enjoyed of reading their ſcriptures; and what has been termed the Diſciplina arcani, which attempted an occaſional ſuppreſſion of different hiſtories or doctrines, is a cuſtom of latter times, and crept into Chriſtianity with Pſeudo-Platoniſm[*]. And at a very early period many tranſlations of them were made into the Syriac and Latin languages. Now it muſt have been almoſt a miracle, if—notwithſtanding the great variety of copies, and tranſlations, of the originals, ſpread abroad among

[a] See Walch On the uſe of the Holy Scripture among the ancient Chriſtians. Leipzig, 1779, in 8vo.

[*] See above, p. 94.

diſtinct communities exiſting in no external connection with each other; notwithſtanding theſe writings were held in profound reverence and diligently ſtudied; notwithſtanding the oppoſite vigilance of heretics and orthodox—if, I ſay, the writings of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts had been falſified in *all* the copies of the originals, and of the various tranſlations, without the oppoſition of any one community, or of any ſingle teacher.

In the beginning, it is true, the Orthodox and Heretics reciprocally accuſed each other of having falſified the holy ſcriptures. But even theſe very accuſations evince the great attention with which the Chriſtians watched over the purity of their ſacred books, and the abſolute impoſſibility of their *univerſal* corruption. An unknown author, noticed by Euſebius[p], accuſes

[p] Hiſt. Eccleſ. lib. v. cap. xxviii. p. 253—55.

the

the followers of Artemon with having introduced their heterodox ſyſtem into the divine ſcriptures. In ſupport of his aſſertion, he appeals to their own copies, and aſſerts that they were not only different from the copies of the orthodox, but alſo perfectly at variance with each other; and reproaches them with being unable to ſupport theſe alterations by the authority of any ancient Manuſcripts. It is by no means certain, that theſe heretics had really introduced thoſe ſuppoſititious alterations into their copies of the New Teſtament; ſince the accuſer ſeems to mean nothing more than the Greek tranſlation of the Old Teſtament, which is called the Septuagint; produces no proofs of any ſuch corruptions; and, in ſhort, ſpeaks in a tone too declamatory, to be received on this ſubject as an accurate relator[q]. But ſhould we

[q] See Lardner's Credibility of the G. H. vol. iii. p. 43—48. 1ſt edit.

grant,

grant, that the accuſations againſt Artemon and his followers were juſtly preferred, yet even theſe prove, that in the earlieſt ages of Chriſtianity it was impoſſible for any one to attempt a corruption of the evangelical and apoſtolical writings, without meeting public oppoſition, and without being openly branded for a deceiver. That we may perceive how much ſuch an alteration of the ſacred ſcriptures was abhorred, I will quote the ſame author's ſentiments on the ſubject. "What a daring crime this is (i. e. the corruption of the ſacred books) poſſibly they themſelves (the followers of Artemon) are not ignorant. For they muſt either not believe the divine Scriptures to have been inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt; or elſe they muſt imagine themſelves wiſer than the Holy Ghoſt: On the firſt ſuppoſition they are infidels; on the ſecond they are out of their ſenſes."—The heretics retaliated,

taliated, and accuſed the orthodox of a ſimilar offence. The Manicheans pretended, that the books of the New Teſtament were not written by the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles, but were falſely attributed to them in latter times, or were at leaſt violently mutilated and corrupted by the Chriſtians[r]. But the Manicheans adopted this pretence, becauſe the ſcriptures of the New Teſtament are evidently contradictory to their erroneous tenets concerning the Old Teſtament, the human nature of Chriſt, the reſurrection of the dead, and two eternal principles[s]. They have themſelves refuted their own aſſertion, by quoting as genuine thoſe paſſages of the New Teſtament which

[r] Fauſtus, one of the moſt learned among the Manicheans, had brought forward this accuſation with the greateſt ſhew of probability in the work, which was refuted by Auguſtine; Lib. xxxii. cap. ii. Lib. xxxiii. cap. iii. in Auguſtini Opera, vol. viii. p. 320, et p. 329, 330. edit. Benedictin.

[s] See the paſſages from Fauſtus quoted above.

treat

treat of the diſcourſes and miracles of Jeſus, without any other proof than thoſe by which we prove the authenticity of the whole[t]. Nor have they offered any *hiſtorical* argument as a proof of their aſſertion. 'There are abſurdities in the writings of the New Teſtament. The Evangeliſts contradict themſelves. The author of the Goſpel attributed to St. Matthew ſpeaks of Matthew in the third perſon[u].' This was the whole proof which the learned Fauſtus could advance in ſupport of his ſuppoſition. Arguments, which in part are viſibly falſe; and which, even if they were true, could determine nothing in an *hiſtorical* diſcuſſion, where every thing depends on the atteſtation of credible *witneſſes*. In order to have eſtabliſhed his aſſertion, Fauſtus ought to have demonſtrated, that all the old writers and

[t] Loc. cit. [u] Loco cit.

manu-

manuſcripts, which we produce as evidences for the authenticity of the New Teſtament, prove nothing. He ought to have quoted oppoſite evidences and manuſcripts, different from thoſe which exiſted among the Chriſtians. He ought to have ſhewn from hiſtory, when and where theſe corruptions were made. Had the doctrines of Chriſtianity been really uncertain, this learned writer, who lived in the latter part of the fourth century, might without much trouble have produced theſe proofs. But on all theſe ſubjects he is *perfectly* ſilent; and every thing which he is able to produce, conſiſts entirely in ſelf-formed concluſions and charges, which are as groundleſs as the principal accuſation.—His adverſary, Auguſtine, challenges him to produce this proof, and appeals with perfect confidence to the unanimous teſtimony of all the teachers, and manuſcripts of antiquity.

quity. "What writings (ſays he[w]) can you receive as genuine, if you reject thoſe of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles? We are convinced of the genuineneſs of the apoſtolical writings in the ſame manner, as we know that the works of Plato, Ariſtotle, Cicero, or Varro, were derived from thoſe whoſe names they bear. Who can be ſo abſurd as to reject our Scriptures, for whoſe genuineneſs, from the time of the Apoſtles, the Church has depoſed ſuch numerous and concordant teſtimonies?"—This very accuſation, therefore, of itſelf proves, that the arguments for the authenticity of the evangelical and apoſtolical writings are incontrovertible.

[w] Contra Fauſtum, Lib. XXXIII. cap. vi. p. 330, 331. edit. Benedictin.

III.

III.—*From the Agreement of all the Manuſcripts.*

THE manuſcripts of the Scriptures of the New Teſtament, which are ſtill extant, are far more numerous than thoſe of any other book in the world. Above two hundred and fifty have been already collated by critics in their different editions. Of theſe, it is true, all do not contain the whole of the New Teſtament: the greater part have only the Goſpels; others contain alſo the Acts and the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles; and a very ſmall number the Revelation of St. John[x]. All theſe

[x] Beſides theſe, a great number are preſerved in the libraries of Germany, Italy, and other countries, which have not yet been conſulted. The moſt perfect and accurate information concerning the MSS. which have been uſed in editions of the Greek Teſt. is to be found in the Prologomena to Mill's and Küſter's edition of the N. T. in the Prologomena to Wetſtein's N. T. and in Michaelis' Intr. to the N. T. vol. iii. p. 185—361. of the learned and accurate Mr. Marſh's Tranſlation.

manu-

manuſcripts, which were written in very different parts of the world, and of which ſome are above twelve hundred years old, give us the books of the New Teſtament in all *eſſential matters* perfectly accordant with each other, as any one may eaſily convince himſelf by examining the editions publiſhed by Mill, Küſter, Bengel, Wetſtein, or Grieſbach.—The thirty thouſand Various Readings, which are ſaid to be found even in the manuſcripts collated by Mill, conſiſt almoſt entirely in nothing but palpable errors in tranſcription, or trifling grammatical and verbal differences which by no means make any alteration in the ſenſe of the ſubject[y]. Some indeed change the

[y] As—Mark iv. 32, inſtead of, ὁταν σπαρῇ, *when it is ſown*; ὁταν φυῇ, *when it is grown up*:—Chap. v. 9, ἀπεκριθη λεγων, *he anſwered*, ſaying; λεγει αυτῳ *he ſays unto him*:—or inſtead of εισελθοντες, ἐλθοντες; inſtead of ἐλληνίσας, ἕλληνας; inſtead of περιτεμνεσθαι, περιτεμειν; inſtead of φαρισαιου, φαρισαιων; inſtead of ἐβαπτισα, ἐβαπτισθη.

ſenſe,

ſenſe, yet only in paſſages which relate unimportant hiſtorical and geographical circumſtances, or other collateral matters [z]. And the few which make any alteration in things of conſequence, do not on that account place us in abſolute uncertainty. For either we can diſcover the true reading by collating the other manuſcripts, verſions, and quotations found in the works of the ancients [a]; or, ſhould this not be the caſe, yet we can even then explain with certainty the doctrine from other paſſages of the ſacred books [b].—Theſe numerous variations,

[z] For inſtance; γαδαρηνων, for γεργεσηνων: βηθαβαρα, for βηθανια: or Luke xxiv. 43, the addition, εφαγε, και τα επιλοιπα εδωκεν αυτοις; Acts of the Apoſt. viii. 39, πνευμα αγιον επεσεν επι τον ευνουχον.

[a] As 1 Tim. iii. 16; where we find the different readings, Θεος ὁς, and ὁ.

[b] For inſtance, Acts of the Apoſt. xx. 28, ſome MSS. inſtead of Θεου have Κυριου. Let us ſuppoſe that we could not here make out which is the true reading, yet the matter may be determined from many other paſſages.

therefore, are the moſt convincing proof, that the Holy Scriptures have not been altered in any point of doctrine or morality, or other matter of importance; becauſe they are found perfectly concordant in all manuſcripts of the originals and of the verſions, which have been written and compoſed in Europe, Aſia, and Africa. So far therefore from being hoſtile to the *uncorrupted preſervation* of the books of our New Teſtament, (as ſome enemies of Chriſtianity have aſſerted from ignorance or wicked motives, and as many Chriſtians have likewiſe apprehended from groundleſs fear) theſe variations afford us, on the contrary, an additional and moſt convincing proof, that they exiſt at preſent, in all eſſential matters, as they left the hands of their authors.

IV.

IV.—*From the agreement of the old verſions, and quotations found in the eccleſiaſtical fathers.*

AFTER all, ſhould any one entertain a doubt concerning the uncorrupted preſervation of our books of the New Teſtament, it muſt perfectly vaniſh, if we conſider the wonderful agreement of all the old verſions, and of all the quotations and extracts found in the eccleſiaſtical fathers.—There is ſtill extant a Syriac tranſlation of all the books of the New Teſtament (the ſecond Epiſtle of St. Peter, the ſecond and third Epiſtles of St. John, the Epiſtle of St. Jude, and the Revelation of St. John, alone excepted), which, in all probability, was made in the firſt century. In the ſame period exiſted in the Weſtern church Latin verſions, of which conſiderable fragments ſtill remain. The Latin tranſ-

lation of Jerom (which is generally called the Vulgate), the Coptic, different Arabic, the Ethiopic, Armenian, Perſic, and Gothic, verſions are indeed in part much more modern, and therefore not conſidered by critics on the New Teſtament as of equal conſequence[c]. Yet they prove thus much, that in all communities of Chriſtians, both in the Eaſt and Weſt, the *ſame writings* have ever been regarded as genuine works of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles, which we in the preſent day find ſtill unaltered in our New Teſtament.—If we add to theſe circumſtances, that the eccleſiaſtical fathers of the firſt centuries have quoted almoſt *every* verſe of the New Teſtament, and, in regard to eſſential points, exactly agreeably to our preſent text; alſo, that many of them (for inſtance, Origen, Chryſoſtom, Jerom, Auguſtin,

[c] Michaelis has given very ample information concerning theſe verſions in his Introduction to the N. T.

Cyril

Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, and Œcumenius,) have left us commentaries either on all, or on individual books of the New Teſtament, of which the ſcriptural text exactly coincides with our printed copies,—we muſt without heſitation confeſs, that the books which are now extant in our editions of the New Teſtament are the uncorrupted writings of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles.

The enemies of Chriſtianity notwithſtanding, continually pretend that they have been corrupted!—No one indeed, who poſſeſſes the leaſt knowledge of the principles of criticiſm, will readily aſſert, that the Various Readings are corruptions.—But on this ſubject we meet with Collins, who appeals to an alteration of the Goſpels, which, according to the information of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, is ſaid to have taken place in the ſixth century under the Emperour Anaſtaſius. Victor,

Biſhop of Tunis in Africa, relates in his Chronicon[a], that the Emperour Anaſtaſius, conſidering that the Goſpels were written by illiterate men, ordered them to be improved at Conſtantinople. This Victor is the only evidence that can be brought forward for this event; for Iſidore of Seville relates it merely on his authority. He lived in Africa; conſequently far diſtant from the ſcene where the alteration is ſaid to have taken place. All the other writers make not the leaſt mention of this circumſtance: which, without doubt, would have excited bitter and unanimous complaints againſt the Emperour, already an object of general hatred. Moreover, Victor offers not the ſhadow of a proof in ſupport of his narration: he names no immediate witneſſes on whoſe authority he relates the ſtory. Now, from a relation ſo

[a] Ad. A. 506. See Scaligeri Theſaurus temporum.

very

very incredible, Collins, in oppoſition to the unanimous aſſertions of ſo many and ſuch credible witneſſes, attempts to prove the corruption of the New Teſtament[e]. But, even if we ſhould grant, that this information delivered by an African Biſhop of an event which is ſaid to have happened at Conſtantinople, is deſerving of credit; yet the alteration would not have taken place in all the manuſcripts which exiſted in the Eaſtern church; for, according to his own information, it is ſaid to have been made only in the manuſcripts at Conſtantinople. And if it had been actually put in execution in all

[e] In his 'Diſcourſe of free-thinking,' p. 69—73. In order to prove that the Scriptures of the New Teſtament are perfectly uncertain, he introduces the following arguments:—1. Becauſe the Canon of the New Teſtament was not made until ſixty years after the death of Chriſt.—(But it could not have been formed earlier, for before that time all the Holy Scriptures had not been compoſed).—2. From the thirty thouſand different readings in Mill.—And 3. From the paſſage of Victor, alluded to above.

the Oriental manuſcripts, yet the manuſcripts of the Weſtern church, over which Anaſtaſius had no authority, would have remained unaltered. Further, if we ſhould grant even this, yet it was impoſſible to alter *all the manuſcripts* of *all the verſions*. Had therefore ſuch an alteration been actually undertaken, it could not have been *univerſal*; but there would ſtill have remained either the manuſcripts of the Weſt, or at leaſt the verſions, from which we might have been enabled to reſtore the original text. Since therefore not only all the Oriental and all the Weſtern manuſcripts of the Greek Goſpels perfectly coincide with each other; but alſo all the old tranſlations, and all the citations and commentaries of the primitive eccleſiaſtical writers are in perfect harmony with them,—it is moſt evident, either that the relation of Victor is a mere fable, or that ſuch an alteration, ſhould it even have been

been reſolved on, was never actually put into execution[f].

Had the enemies of Chriſtianity ſtudied the proofs of our holy religion with more diligence and impartial care, they would not at leaſt have conſidered ſuch palpable abſurdities as objections to its truth. The objection of Collins has perhaps a ſemblance of reaſon. But when Chubb[g] ſays—'It is abundantly evident that the Bible has been corrupted in the dark ages of popery by the clergy, in whoſe hands it at

[f] See 'Remarks upon a late diſcourſe of free-thinking, by Phileleutherus Lipſienſis,' Cambridge, the ſixth edition, 1725, in 8vo. Dr. Richard Bentley, the author of this work, defends the authenticity of our New Teſtament, particularly againſt the objections which are drawn from the Various Readings, and from the above-mentioned information of Victor, p. 61—84.—In all probability this ſtory of Victor took its origin from his having miſunderſtood the account concerning Macedonius, Patriarch of Conſtantinople. See loc. cit. p. 82.

[g] In his Poſthumous Works, vol. i. p. 65, 66, 118, 121, 122, &c.

that

that time exclusively existed,'—it is in fact to assert, that the Pope and his clergy had brought together all the manuscripts of the New Testament, and the almost innumerable manuscripts of the different versions, and all the works of the ecclesiastical fathers; and when, with wonderful sagacity, they had projected and carried into execution such an almost miraculous undertaking, that with inconceivable stupidity they altered not a single one of those passages which evidently contradict their erroneous tenets, for instance, concerning papal supremacy, the worship of saints, the mass, celibacy, monastic vows, purgatory, and indulgences.

PART

PART II.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BOOK I.

The Authors of the New Teſtament poſſeſs in a very high Degree all the requiſite Qualities of credible Evidences.

IF we now unite the propoſitions already proved; if we conſider the great number of credible witneſſes, who unanimouſly relate, that ſoon after the death of Jeſus four Goſpels, and the ſame number of Epiſtles as ſtill exiſt in the collection of the New Teſtament, were written by the Apoſtles and Diſciples of Jeſus; that theſe books, as we poſſeſs them at preſent, are the very

very ſame in all the tranſlations and manuſcripts of the original; and perfectly coincide with the quotations and commentaries of the primitive writers; —we muſt either reject the writings of Xenophon, Thucydides, Livy and Tacitus, for whoſe authenticity neither ſo many nor ſtrong arguments can be found, and, in a word, all the ancient writings in the world, as not genuine, —or we muſt acknowledge, that the ſcriptures of the New Teſtament are *authentic*, and in every matter of importance, *perfectly uncorrupted*.

But from this alone we cannot determine their *Credibility*. An author may write of events, which happened in his time and in the place of his reſidence, but ſhould he be either *credulous* or a *fanatic*, or ſhould we have reaſon to ſuſpect his *honeſty*, his evidence is of no value. In order, therefore, to eſtabliſh the Credibility of an author, we muſt examine more cloſely into

into his particular character, and inquire whether he poſſeſſed *abilities* ſufficient to ſcrutinize the truth, and *honeſty* enough faithfully to relate it as it happened.

Now the hiſtorical writers of the New Teſtament are diſtinguiſhed alſo from all others whoſe credibility has never been called in queſtion by any reaſonable man, in this reſpect—that if hiſtorical ſubjects were capable of mathematical demonſtration, we muſt acknowledge that their credibility has been not only morally proved, but even demonſtrated mathematically.

SECT. I.

They were immediate Witneſſes.

THE writers of the New Teſtament *lived at the time*, and *in the place*, of the actual occurrence of the events, which are the ſubject of their hiſtory. St. Matthew, St. John, St. Peter, St. James,

James, and St. Jude, were Jews by birth, and lived in the reigns of Auguſtus and Tiberius, at Jeruſalem, the ſcene of the hiſtory which they relate. They were all, moreover, *immediate* diſciples of Jeſus, and the facts contained in their hiſtories had been ſubject to the ſcrutiny of their own ſenſes. —It is true that St. Paul was a native of Tarſus, and not among thoſe who had been the friends of Jeſus, and the eye-witneſſes of his actions. Yet he had lived a long time at Jeruſalem, had ſtudied Theology under Gamaliel, a Jewiſh ſcholar at that time in the greateſt repute, and diligently employed himſelf in acquiring a thorough knowledge of the Jewiſh religion.—We have but few biographical memoirs extant of St. Mark and St. Luke: Yet thus much we do know, that the former compoſed his hiſtory under the immediate inſpection of St. Peter[h], and the

[h] See the teſtimonies of Clement of Alexandria, Papias, and Tertullian, on this ſubject.

latter his narration under the immediate inſpection of St. Paul [i]. Their hiſtories muſt therefore be conſidered to poſſeſs the ſame authority as if they had been written by the eye-witneſſes themſelves, whom we have named above [k].

SECT. II.

They were alſo competent Witneſſes.

THE writers of the New Teſtament had *the moſt important reaſons*, and ſufficient abilities, to examine into the truth or falſhood of their hiſtories.

[i] See the teſtimonies of Tertullian and Origen.

[k] The Acts of the Apoſtles and the Goſpel by St. Luke form but one book. For in the Acts of the Apoſtles i. 1. the writer names his Goſpel πρωτον λογον, librum primum, *the firſt part*; he continues immediately from thence, where he had left off in the Goſpel; and has dedicated both to *one* man, namely, Theophilus.—Conſequently, whatever is ſaid by the ancients concerning the Hiſtory of St. Luke, is to be underſtood not only of the Goſpel, but alſo of the Acts of the Apoſtles.

They

They relate their memoirs, not for the purpoſe of delighting future ages, or of conveying information in the uſual method of hiſtorical writings; but they build on them a *Syſtem of Religion*, from which alone they expected their temporal and eternal welfare. 'If Chriſt be not riſen,' ſays St. Paul[1], 'then is our doctrine and your faith falſe; then are we yet in our ſins; then they who have died in the belief of the truth of our religion are periſhed for ever; then are we perſecuted Chriſtians of all men the moſt miſerable.' A hiſtory which they conceived to be ſo eſſential, the very foundation of all their hopes and of all their faith, had been undoubtedly ſcrutinized and proved by them with the moſt anxious care.

[1] 1 Corinth. xv. 13—19.

SECT.

SECT. III.

They were by no means credulous.

" BUT who—it is objected—is un-
" acquainted with the power of *Cre-*
" *dulity* and *Fanaticiſm?* The innu-
" merable multitude of fanatics of
" whom hiſtory gives us information,
" may have employed care and labour
" enough on the examination of their
" wonderful adventures; yet credulity
" and fanaticiſm had blinded their rea-
" ſon to that degree, that ſome of them
" have even fancied that they had a
" daily intercourſe with the Deity,
" and were furniſhed with miraculous
" powers. No one, for inſtance, can
" deny that Baron Swedenborg was a
" man of learning, penetration, and
" honeſty; nevertheleſs this man, in
" other reſpects of ſound judgment
" and worthy of credit, believed and

 " aſſerted,

" aſſerted, for the ſpace of more than " forty years, that he had frequent " viſits from angels, was caught up " into Heaven, and there received a " variety of new doctrines."—Certainly this obſervation ought to render us extremely cautious in examining ſuch hiſtories, particularly thoſe connected with a religious ſyſtem. But this caution and ſeverity of examination, when applied to the hiſtory of the New Teſtament, ſhew us ſo much the more evidently, that the writers of it poſſeſſed the moſt perfect capability of avoiding any errors, and of accurately examining the true ground of their narratives. The events which they relate are of ſuch a nature, that the proof of their truth requires nothing more than *ſound organs of ſenſe*. The examples of the aſtoniſhing deceptions of fanatical people relate for the moſt part to *opinions*; ſeldom or never to hiſtorical ſubjects, or to *matters of fact*.

And

And who does not perceive that theſe are widely different from each other? In a Court of juſtice we can prove the truth of a fact by means of witneſſes; but it has never been heard, that the truth of an opinion (for inſtance, the immateriality or immortality of the ſoul) was eſtabliſhed by the depoſition of evidences. A man may likewiſe be deceived from certain affections incomparably eaſier in the caſe of opinions, than in the caſe of facts. In the caſe of facts alſo there exiſts a great difference. The Quaker, Jacob Maylor, in the time of Cromwell's protectorate, could eaſily imagine that he was transformed into the perſon of Chriſt, and made the Saviour of the world: or another fanatic may with equal eaſe perſuade himſelf, that he enjoys viſions of the Deity, and that he feels a particular inſpiration of the Spirit. For in order to aſcertain the truth of facts which concern ourſelves, and our

internal ſenſations, we muſt preſuppoſe the perſon endowed with a ſound and well-cultivated judgment, and no common knowledge of the diſtinction between ſenſations and imaginations. But that a man, Jeſus, taught at Jeruſalem in the reign of Tiberius; that he revealed certain new and peculiar doctrines to his diſciples; that in public places, and in the preſence of many perſons, he healed a variety of people who were lame, blind and dumb, and alſo, under circumſtances of the like publicity, gave life to the dead; that he died on the croſs, was buried in the cuſtomary manner of the Jews, and on the third day came again alive to his friends; had intimate intercourſe with them as before his death; and in the ſight of many of theſe friends aſcended gradually into the air, and at laſt vaniſhed from their eyes;—*ſuch* facts require, in order to prove their truth, and ſet them beyond the poſſi-

bility

bility of doubt, nothing more than that the witneſs's organs of ſight and hearing be ſound, and that he uſes them like one awake.

To this muſt be added, that the Apoſtles were by no means *credulous.* They might perhaps have poſſeſſed this paſſion, ſo prevalent among the Jews, in other reſpects, and have amuſed themſelves with fables. But, *in this matter,* they were certainly ſo far removed from it, that we have reaſon to think them rather *incredulous* and *obſtinate.* Their Maſter had informed them beforehand, that after his paſſion and death he would ariſe from the dead: but ſcarcely had the Roman guard taken him into cuſtody, before they all fled, reſigned their flattering hopes, and abſolutely denied that they had ever known him. Some women relate that they had found the grave empty, and had ſpoken with Jeſus alive. Now, had the Apoſtles been

in the leaſt degree credulous, they would not aſſuredly have had the leaſt heſitation in believing it: but they ridiculed it as an idle tale[m]. St. Peter nevertheleſs, inſtigated by curioſity, runs to the place, and finds the report perfectly true; the grave is open and empty; he—wonders and departs[n]. After ſome time Jeſus comes into their aſſembly, where ten of the Apoſtles are preſent: and now they can doubt no longer. But St. Thomas, who was abſent, thinks them all deceived, and will not believe before he has accurately inſpected the body of this perſon, and diſcovered on it the marks of his crucifixion, and the wound in his ſide[o]. And how violently was St. Paul prepoſſeſſed againſt the truth of this hiſtory? How active in diſcovering thoſe who confeſſed it, and in procuring their death[p]? Can we believe that

[m] Luke xxiv. 1—11. [o] John xx. 24, 25.
[n] Luke xxiv. 12. [p] Acts viii.-ix.

ſuch

ſuch people were *credulous*, and ſuppoſe that they received their hiſtory as true on the firſt vague report, without further examination?—Had Cromwell, in the preſence of the Lords and Commons, aſſerted that he had ſeen the unfortunate King Charles a few weeks after his execution, firſt in Weſtminſter Abbey, and afterwards many times in St. James's palace, and converſed with him frequently for ſeveral hours together; had the Uſurper, in conſequence of this, reſigned the Protectorate, and made preparations for bringing back the exiled Queen and family; we ſhould have conceived, perhaps, that he had experienced an extraordinarily violent fit of *Fanaticiſm*; but it would have occurred to no one to accuſe him on this account of *Credulity*; and to aſſert, that he had blindly received this relation as true only on the information of an old ſol-

dier, or a woman that was perfectly unknown to him.

SECT. IV.

Neither were they Fanatics.

SOME may perhaps be inclined to adduce the above example againſt the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory. The *ſtrangeneſs* and *wonderfulneſs* of ſuch a relation, it may be ſaid, would have inclined every reaſonable man to have conceived that the Protector was rather a fanatic than that his narration was true. This I ſhall hereafter examine. And here, where we are not treating of the *miracles*, but merely of the common and cuſtomary events, of the apoſtolical hiſtory, we muſt firſt examine this queſtion,—whether the writers of the New Teſtament can reaſonably be conſidered as fanatics; or whether we cannot diſcover evident traces,

traces, that they were not in the leaſt infected with this dangerous poiſon of the human underſtanding? An inquiry which will conduct us into one of the moſt intereſting and inſtructive parts of the hiſtory of the human underſtanding; and is abſolutely eſſential for the conviction of Chriſtians, on account of the frequent accuſation of fanaticiſm which is made by the enemies of the New Teſtament. To examine this ſubject therefore more accurately will amply repay our trouble.

I will, in the firſt place, endeavour to collect from hiſtory the different features in the character of this aſtoniſhing phenomenon, a fanatic;—and then compare the picture with our ſcriptural writers [q].—*A fanatic thinks himſelf always*

q Fanatic, fanaticus, ἐκστατικός, φαντασικός, is one who acts only according to his ſenſations, and not according to the reflections of his reaſon. And this is the caſe, even when his ſenſations are true, agreeable to their objects: but ſtill more ſo, when they are merely

ways the chief favourite of heaven. And truly a perſon in whom the Divinity immediately dwells, with whom He deigns daily to hold immediate converſe, and makes a living oracle; ſuch a perſon moſt aſſuredly has reaſon to believe, that he is extraordinarily favoured by God. This fanatical pride is often carried to ſuch an extent in men, that they convince themſelves God ſhould do every thing which they deſire; and if He does it not, think themſelves offended, break out into acrimonious complaints againſt Him, or uncharitable accuſations of ungodlineſs in other men, which they fancy

merely imaginary. A man may act fanatically in a variety of ways: for inſtance, if he be guided in his conduct by mere antipathies, or ſympathies; perform any thing only becauſe he feels an internal excitement to it; imagine that he has ſeen angels, hears diſcourſes from heaven, &c.—But we muſt be very careful not to confound the fanatic with the ſentimentaliſt, the man of feeling (ευθυσιαστικος): the latter is a praiſeworthy quality, the former a blameable.

to

to be the cauſe of the diſaffection of heaven.—*Diſorder and contradiction in their ſyſtem,* (if a collection of unconnected, problematical, and contradictory opinions can be called a ſyſtem) *and obſcurity and abſurdity in their explication of it,* form another feature in the fanatical character. Men, in whom the power of the ſenſes is extended to a kind of madneſs, are not in a condition to employ the reaſoning faculties of the underſtanding, which require internal tranquillity. And the conſtant tumult of their minds renders them incapable of ſpeaking connectedly and rationally. Should they diſcourſe of their *inſpiration,* that obſcurity becomes perfect nonſenſe. A Fanatic may be a perſon of great talents and rare prudence in the management of his temporal concerns. But this ſtrength of mind is of no other uſe to him only to ſink him deeper in the vortex of his fancies and follies.

follies. And this abſurdity in his diſcourſes, compared with the prudence in the management of his temporal concerns, forms one of the ſtrangeſt contraſts that we can imagine.—Fanatics are generally *enemies, or at leaſt contemners, of all written revelation:* becauſe it renders their own continual inſpiration perfectly unneceſſary. They diſtinguiſh it by the low and irreverent name of an *obſcure writing*, which muſt be cleared up by internal light, and of a *dead letter*, which muſt be animated by the living ſpirit which exiſts in the ſoul.—This is the cauſe of the *complete indifference to all religion*, which is commonly united with Fanaticiſm. 'Their mind,' ſays a profoundly thinking hiſtorian, 'which floats on the wide ſea of inſpiration, can be confined within no bounds; and therefore they permit to others alſo the ſame liberty.' But however tolerant they may often be in religious matters,

matters, in their civil concerns they are equally cruel and barbarous. The ſuppoſition that they are immediately influenced by God in all their actions and undertakings, and that they think and act by his command, places them far above humanity, and blinds them to ſuch a degree, that they exerciſe the moſt cruel tyranny, and ſhed in ſtreams the blood of God's creatures and children, not only without any ſenſations of pity, but, on the contrary, with joy and triumph.—That fanatics exhibit a *wonderful firmneſs under ſufferings and torments* is known to every one, and has been frequently uſed by the enemies of Chriſtianity, to detract from the firm heroic courage of the Chriſtian martyrs. But the characteriſtic of fanatical firmneſs under torments, namely that *imprudent, inflexible obſtinacy and that inſenſible obduracy* which in theſe caſes they conſtantly exhibit, has not been often remarked.

If

If a perſon does not give himſelf the leaſt trouble to repreſent to his tyrants, with modeſty and gentleneſs, the principles for the ſake of which he is perſecuted; but, on the contrary, anſwers thoſe in authority over him either not at all, or with impertinence; if he reject all the methods, which prudence would point out for avoiding his torments either wholly or in part, without violence to his principles, and if he rather ſolicit ſufferings: who does not perceive that ſuch a firmneſs under torments cannot proceed from a calm and rational reflection and an heroic diſregard of the world; but is the effect of a moroſe, unſocial obſtinacy and an inhuman obduracy; rather a paroxiſm of frenzy than a praiſeworthy firmneſs of mind?—This paroxiſm often increaſes to ſuch a degree, that it produces even *convulſive agitations of the body*, and *abſolute madneſs*; as we learn particularly from the early hiſtory

tory of the Quakers.—Such gloomy and moroſe perſons, who conſider the world with nauſea and hatred, and have retired as it were back into themſelves, in order to liſten conſtantly to the ſuggeſtions of heaven; who imagine that they are infinitely exalted above common humanity, and are the particular objects of the divine favour and care: ſuch perſons cannot certainly form a ſocial, beneficent ſyſtem of morality. Condemnation of all innocent indulgences; a ſolitary, ſelfiſh, gloomy, melancholy life; numerous faſts; rigid vows of celibacy; all poſſible avoidance of domeſtic and civil ſociety; hoſtile hatred of the body and of the world; corporeal ſufferings and mortifications; in ſhort, a *moroſe, unſocial, and barbarous ſeverity* is the characteriſtic of a Fanatic's ſyſtem of morality.

It would conduct me too far from my purpoſe, were I to enter on a more

more ample developement of this character. Whoever is acquainted with the hiſtory of the Montaniſts, of Mahomet, of the earlieſt Anabaptiſts, of Cromwell and his fanatical followers, of the Quakers, and Janſeniſts, will be able to confirm the truth of each individual feature ſketched above by many examples from hiſtory.

From this picture of fanaticiſm cannot be ſelected a ſingle, even the moſt trifling, feature which can be applied to the writers of the New Teſtament; on the contrary, they poſſeſſed traits diametrically oppoſite to every one of them.—Theſe men relate many great errors and faults which they had themſelves fallen into: their ſtrange ideas of the temporal kingdom of the Meſſiah; their inconſtancy towards Jeſus, whom they all deſerted at his death; the raſh and mad zeal with which St. Paul perſecuted the Chriſtians; the reprehenſible hypocriſy of St. Peter. They

They make mean and humble deſcriptions of themſelves; they attribute all their gifts and extraordinary endowments ſolely to the unmerited grace of God; they repreſent themſelves as ſlaves, ſervants of the Chriſtians, and as unworthy objects of the divine grace and beneficence[r]. They ſpeak, alſo, uniformly of themſelves with equal reverence, modeſty, and humility[s].—In their ſyſtem exiſts the moſt perfect harmony. St. Paul has never contradicted himſelf in his epiſtles, which he wrote at very different times, and addreſſed to very different communities and perſons. The hiſtorians of Jeſus have indeed ſome trifling diſcrepancies in the collateral circumſtances of their narratives (and this is an evident proof that they did not copy one from another); but in eſſential matters they entirely and perfectly

[r] 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.
[s] 1 Corinth. xv. 10. 2 Corinth.

agree. And although ſcarcely one among them had read the writings of the others [t], yet their hiſtories and doctrines are perfectly concordant. The ſyſtem itſelf, even thoſe parts of it which treat of their inſpiration [u], is exhibited with ſuch method, connection, perſpicuity, and good natural underſtanding, that the moſt ſimple can underſtand it in its eſſential parts, and comprehend the ſenſe of the writers [w].—

In

[t] St. John, St. Peter, and St. Jude, are the only ſcriptural authors, of whom it is probable that they had read the writings of the others, before they compoſed their own works.

[u] 1 Corinth. ii.

[w] Benſon, in the Appendix to his Paraphraſe of the Epiſtle to Philemon, in the Firſt Diſſertation, 'In which it is ſhewn that St. Paul could neither be an impoſtor nor an enthuſiaſt,' has made ſome very excellent obſervations on the character of the Apoſtle, which is ſo clearly expreſſed in the whole of the Epiſtle: how far he was removed from all ambition, pride, and ſelfiſhneſs; how compaſſionate towards human miſery and weakneſs; how well acquainted with the modes of thinking and language of the poliſhed world; how exempt

In their writings they ſhew the greateſt veneration for the written revelation of the Old Teſtament. They exhort their diſciples to ſtudy it diligently[x]; they pronounce it a truly divine revelation, and a binding rule of belief and conduct[y]; and they point out its friendly harmony with the Chriſtian ſyſtem[z].—They invariably inſiſt on this truth, that no other religion than that which they preached, can procure men

exempt from a ſolitary enthuſiaſtic temper of mind. Read this Epiſtle in the Paraphraſe of Sir Richard Steele, in his Chriſtian Hero. I could wiſh that ſome friend of the Chriſtian religion would, with the ſame view, devote his attention to the conſideration of the ſpeeches of St. Paul in the Acts of the Apoſtles, and unfold the connection, ſolidity, confidence, ſublimity, and integrity which are ſo very prominent in them. Such a work would be a convincing apology for the ſcriptural authors, in reſpect of their pretended fanaticiſm.

x 2 Tim. iii. 14—17.

y 2 Peter i. 20, 21.

z Acts ii. 14—36. xiii. 15—41. Rom. iv. 10. 19—21, &c.

ſo great and laſting happineſs[a]. But they make always a diſtinction between guilty and innocent ignorance and error[b]: And thus reject all religious indifference on the one hand, and on the other all intolerant and anathematizing principles. —In their ſentiments and actions we remark the moſt meek, charitable and benevolent temper. They earneſtly forbid men to accuſe others of heterodoxy, or to pronounce them damned[c]; they anxiouſly exhort to obedience of human ordinances, and the commands of the heathen magiſtracy[d]; they direct that prayers ſhould be offered up even for Nero[e]; and their whole ſyſtem of morals is directly pointed to inſtil into their diſciples an univerſal, conſtant, diſintereſted, and generous

[a] Acts iv. 12. Rom. iii. 20—26.
[b] Rom. i. ii. &c.
[c] Rom. xiv. 3—23.
[d] Rom. xiii. 1—7. 1 Peter ii. 13—17.
[e] 1 Tim. ii. 1—6.

phi-

philanthropy[f]. 'I conjure you by all the good things, which Jeſus has procured us; by the enlivening comforts which accompany charity; by the intimate connection in which you ſtand with one another; that you fulfil my only joy, and be unanimous, charitable, of one mind; do nothing with ſtrife, and vain glory, but in humility let each eſteem others higher than himſelf; and be anxious not only for your own advantage, but alſo for the advantage of others. For you muſt have ſentiments ſuch as were the ſentiments of Jeſus Chriſt; who joyfully and voluntarily yielded up all his preeminencies and divine majeſty for the advantage of men[g]. Is this the language of a Fanatic? Read only the thirteenth chapter of the firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians, or the firſt Epiſtle of St. John, and then ſay, whether ſuch ſo-

[f] Rom. xiii. 8—16. Galat. v. 13, 14.
[g] Phil. ii. 1—11.

cial and benevolent principles and ſentiments could exiſt in the mind of a Fanatic? Did ever a Fanatic place philanthropy, that is a philanthropy which conſiſts in an univerſally extended, and univerſally active kindneſs[h], above all his opinions, favourite doctrines, and eſpecial gifts? or ſpeak of it with ſuch ſtrong feelings and in ſuch emphatic language?—And this ſyſtem of morals they not only enforced by words, but alſo by their example. They have never aſſumed a dominion over their diſciples; never required what they directed, in a commanding tone. Was it neceſſary for the welfare of Chriſtianity to uſe ſeverity? even this was marked with the characters of pity towards the tranſgreſſors, and of a paramount deſire to increaſe the general good. And their whole life was a ſeries of afflictions, tribulations, ſuf-

[h] 1 Corinth. xiii. 4—7.

ferings

ferings and critical dangers, which they bore from a love to their fellow creatures.—Again, how infinitely different was their behaviour under ſufferings, from the behaviour of a Fanatic! They preached indeed their doctrines with ardent courage and undaunted firmneſs: but they no where courted ſufferings. Are they perſecuted in one city? they flee to another. Are they apprehended, and dragged before the ſeat of juſtice? they diſcover a profound reverence for the magiſtracy; return the deſired anſwers to every queſtion; declare the doctrines which they preached with becoming and modeſt boldneſs; refute the falſe accuſations of their adverſaries; and uſe every means, which prudence or foreſight ſuggeſt, to conciliate their judges, and make them inclined towards them. And was all this ineffectual? could they not otherwiſe eſcape condemation than by renouncing their religion?

then, compoſed and courageous; with minds full of philanthropy and reconciliation; and pouring forth fervent prayers for the welfare of their enemies and executioners, they ſubmitted to death. It is only ſuch a ſerenity of mind, when the bitterneſs of affliction is felt; devoid of all obſtinacy and contumacious diſrepect for others; and ſuffering ſolely for the love of truth, that can be named heroic courage and firmneſs of mind.— In their whole ſyſtem of morals nothing is found of moroſe, gloomy ſeverity. They pronounce mortifications and voluntary ſufferings to be of no importance in the ſight of God[i], but rather folly and barbarous abſurdity[k]. They know nothing of the monkiſh virtues of thoſe who call themſelves more modern Chriſtians; of voluntary poverty, abſtinence from matrimonial

[i] 1 Corinth. xiii. 3.
[k] Epheſ. v. 29. Coloſſ. ii.

con-

connections, avoidance of ſocial ſocieties, and rejection of temporal dignities and honours. They no where condemn the ſolicitation or poſſeſſion of honours and wealth, or the enjoyment of the pleaſures which this world affords: they only exhort Chriſtians to uſe theſe goods of the earth with grateful hearts towards God; devoid of every unſocial act of impurity, cruelty, or exceſs; and for the welfare of mankind in general[l]. Can any maxims be conceived more ſuitable, more advantageous to the human race, than thoſe which St. Paul delivers[m]? 'Charge the rich of this world, that they be not proud; and that they place not their truſt in periſhable riches, but in the Eternal God, who plentifully provides for our enjoyment

[l] Rom xiii. 1—6. xiv. 1 Corinth. vii. 17—24. and in the whole of the 8th chap. x. 27—33. 1 Tim. iv. 1—5.

[m] 1 Tim. vi. 17—19.

of

of the goods of the earth. That they do good; be rich in good works; generous, and impart willingly; and thereby assure themselves of eternal life.'—And it is particularly worthy of remark, that they did not preach this most enlivening and comfortable system of morals, like Seneca or Plato, possessed of all the enjoyments of life, but under every species of tribulation and affliction[a].

The writers of the New Testament are, therefore, far removed from the pride of thinking themselves the especial favourites of God; they produce with method and perspicuity a connected, harmonious system of religion; they are great advocates for written revelation; they insist on the necessity of their religion, and condemn indeed all spirit of persecution, but at the same time all religious indifference;

[a] 1 Tim. iv. 1—4. vi. 17—19. Compare with 2 Corinth. iv. vi. xi.

the central point of their ſyſtem of morals, and of their conduct, is philanthropy, embracing and promoting the happineſs of all; they exhibit under afflictions and torments a truly heroic courage; they cenſure all melancholy and gloom, recommend the uſe and enjoyment of earthly pleaſures, and direct them to the nobleſt aim, the good of human ſociety.—They are conſequently *diametrically oppoſite* to Fanatics[o].

SECT. V.

They were, on the contrary, Men of Integrity.

THE writers of the New Teſtament have given ſtrong proofs of their integrity. I have already remarked[p],

[o] See Lyttleton's Converſion and Apoſtleſhip of St. Paul, in which this is proved particularly in regard to that Apoſtle.

[p] See above, 11, and following pages.

that

that the ſtyle of their writings, and the choice of the events which they relate, contain ſtrong arguments for their honeſty. But it may be neceſſary in this place to extend this examination ſomewhat further.—In the hiſtorical books written by Jewiſh and heathen contemporaries, *who were not Chriſtians*, many events of the Goſpel-hiſtory are confirmed. I will not delay the reader by proving, that every thing which the writers of the New Teſtament caſually relate of the Roman emperours, Auguſtus, Tiberius, and Claudius; of the kings and conſiderable perſons among the Jews; of the magiſtracies and cuſtoms of the Romans, Greeks, and Jews; of the civil rights and conſtitutions of the Jewiſh ſtates; of the religious ſyſtems and opinions which then exiſted among them—exactly coincides with the information of foreign hiſtorians on theſe ſubjects. Lardner has diſcuſſed this

ſubject

ſubject in the firſt part of his Credibility of the Goſpel-hiſtory with extraordinary labour, accuracy, and ſolidity[q]. It is ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe to ſelect from the great maſs of events which he has produced, ſome of the principal, which either belong to the hiſtory of Chriſtianity itſelf, or are intimately connected with it.

Of the Taxing, (more properly, Enrolment, απογραφη) which, according to St. Luke[r], compelled the Parents of Jeſus to leave Nazareth their place of reſidence, and go to Bethlehem, we find indeed no mention in foreign writers[s]. But the ſpeech of Gamaliel, which

[q] In the ſecond volume (firſt edition) of the Credibility of the Goſpel-hiſtory: or the facts *occaſionally* mentioned in the N. T., confirmed by paſſages of Ancient Authors, who were contemporary with our Saviour or his Apoſtles, or lived near their time.

[r] ii. 1—5.

[s] The information itſelf of the Evangeliſt is of very doubtful interpretation. It is uncertain whether he

which is given us in the Acts of the Apoſtles [t], makes mention of an enrolment [u] which happened at the time when Judas the Galilean excited a ſedition among the Jews. And in Joſephus [w] we find, that after the baniſh-

he ſpeaks of a taxation of the *whole Roman empire*, or only of the *whole Jewiſh territory*; (for γη may ſignify either *world* or *country*.) And the words αυτη η απογραφη πρωτη εγενετο ηγεμονευοντος της Συριας Κυρηνιου, are tranſlated by the commentators in *three* different ways: 1. This taxation was the firſt when Cyrenius was governour of Syria: 2. This taxation was made before Cyrenius was governour of Syria: 3. This taxation was the firſt of thoſe which were made by Cyrenius (afterwards) governour of Syria. Lardner has treated moſt amply of this matter, Credibility of the G. H. Part I. vol. ii. p. 1—188. 1ſt edit. But what he aſſerts, p. 70, is very improbable; that the adminiſtration of the oath to the Jews, which, according to the information of Joſephus (Antiquit. XVII. cap. ii. § 6) happened at the time of Herod, is the ſame event as the enrolment of St. Luke: that this aſſertion is unfounded is evidently ſeen by comparing together the two accounts.

[t] v. 34—39.

[u] v. 37.

[w] Antiquit. XVIII. chap. i. § 1. p. 869, 870.

ment

ment of Archelaus, Judea was made a Roman province, and an enrolment was appointed by Cyrenius, then Preſident of Syria; on which occaſion a certain Galilean, of the name of Judas, excited the people not to ſubmit to this order[z]. Let us compare the ſpeech of Gamaliel, in the Acts of the Apoſtles, "After this man (viz. Theudas, v. 36.) roſe up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the enrolment, and drew away much people after him." How exact and true is this narration!—St. Matthew relates[y] an action of King Herod, which, in reſpect to cruelty, has ſcarcely a parallel in hiſtory. He commanded all the male children in Bethlehem and the neighbouring country, who were a year old and under, to be put to death; becauſe he had been informed, that in that place was born one who was King of the

[z] De bello Judaico, Lib. VII. c. viii. §. 1. p. 422.
[y] ii. 1—16.

Jews.

Jews. This appears to us, who are accuſtomed to the finer feelings of Chriſtianity, almoſt incredible. But let us compare the character of this prince, as drawn by Joſephus, with the above-mentioned fact, and we ſhall find that his action is perfectly agreeable to his ruling ſentiments and mode of thinking, and no more than we ſhould expect from a man of a ſimilar character. Herod had no common underſtanding and talents; but was biaſſed by an unlimited and inſatiable ambition. This ambition urged him on to do every thing, without diſtinction, whether it were vicious or had the ſemblance of virtue, which tended to gratify his ruling paſſion. Hence aroſe in his character that heterogeneous mixture of affable behaviour, ſplendid expence, tenderneſs towards his friends, and ſpecious undertakings on the one ſide,—ſuſpicion, rapaciouſneſs, implacability, irreligion, in-

inhumanity, and tiger-like cruelty on the other. He was reſolute and daring in his undertakings; mild, converſible and agreeable in his external behaviour; generous in matters which tended to the advantage, delight or ſplendour of the public; and in outward appearance willing to do good to all. Yet this ſame man opened for himſelf a path to the throne by the murder of Antigonus and Hyrcanus, the only remaining princes of the Maccabean family; the latter, who was his near relation and had ſaved his life, he aſſaſſinated with his own hand, and of the former he procured the death by means of bribery. He complied with the idolatrous worſhip of the Romans; plundered his ſubjects; and was ſuſpicious and jealous of his beſt friends. Ariſtobulus, the brother of his wife Mariamne, was murdered by his directions, only becauſe the people at Jeruſalem ſhewed ſome affection for

his perſon. Mariamne herſelf ſuffered a public execution, which was ſoon followed by that of her mother Alexandra. He put to death, in cold blood, a great number of the moſt conſiderable perſons among the Jews; and even his own promiſing ſons Alexander and Ariſtobulus were ſtrangled by his orders, becauſe he ſuſpected that they might ſtrive to obtain the ſovereign power[z]. But the moſt horrible of all was

[z] Joſephus, Antiquit. Judaic. Lib. XIV. cap. xvi. §. 4. p. 737. edit. Haverkamp. XV. cap. iii. §. 3. p. 745. XV. cap. vi. §. 2. p. 756. cap. vii. §. 4—6. p. 761—763; ibid. §. 8. p. 763, 764. XVI. cap. xi. §. 6. p. 822. The laſt moſt painful illneſs with which Herod was afflicted, is pronounced by Joſephus to have been a puniſhment of the juſt God for the crimes of the king, XVII. cap. vi. §. 5. p. 845, and he concludes the account of his life with this painting; *αιτης ωμος μεν εις παντας ὁμοιως και οργης μεν ησσων, κρεισσων δε τυ δικαιυ*, Lib. XVII. cap. viii. §. 1, p. 848. The Jewiſh Ambaſſadors, who, after his death, requeſted the Emperour Auguſtus, rather to make their country a Roman province, than to place it under the dominion of the Herodian family, affirmed, that

was the laſt action with which he departed out of the world, and from which he wiſhed to eſtabliſh another monument to his memory, and immortalize his name. In his laſt illneſs he commanded all the principal people of the nation to aſſemble themſelves at Jeruſalem, where he then lay. At their arrival they were ſhut up in the Hippodrome, and the dying king gave his ſiſter Salome and her huſband Alexas the following order, "As ſoon as the breath is out of my body, let them all be put to death, that all Judea may be compelled to lament at my deceaſe." 'With tears in his eyes, (ſays Joſephus[a],) he conjured them by their love

'that he had been a moſt cruel tyrant, and that the nation had ſuffered more through him alone, than it had during many preceding centuries.' Joſ. De B. J. 21. 6. 2. p. 156. Haverc.

[a] Antiquit. Judaicar. Lib. XVII. cap. vi. §. 5. p. 845, 846; De Bello Jud. Lib. I. cap. xxxiii. §. 6. p. 141. A ſhort time before the breath departed from

love for him, and by their fidelity to God, not to refuſe him this laſt honour.' In ſuch a ravenous beaſt in human form it was one of the ſmalleſt crimes[b], if deaf to the voice of pity and humanity, and unaffected by the innocence of the children and the poignant grief of their diſconſolate mothers, he inhumanly dragged them from the arms of their parents, and put them to death with the ferocity of a tiger[c].—St. Matthew informs us,

his body, Antipater alſo, his eldeſt ſon, was put to death by his command, becauſe, it being believed that the king his father was dead, he was about to take upon himſelf the ſucceſſion. Antiquit. XVII. cap. vii. p. 847; and, De Bello Jud. I. cap. 33. §. 7. p. 141.

[b] The character of this miſerable man, drawn by the hand of a maſter, is to be found in Sterne's Sermons.

[c] Although Joſephus has not related this hiſtory, of which omiſſion the cauſe is not difficult to be diſcovered, (ſee Lardner's Credibility of the G. H. Part I. vol. ii. p. 194—196. 1ſt edit.) yet the whole character which he aſcribes to this Jewiſh king, is the moſt evident confirmation of the barbarous deed mentioned by

us[d], that Jeſus had been in Egypt: and this is confirmed even by Celſus

by the Evangeliſt. Macrobius, a heathen writer of the fourth century, relates of Auguſtus, 'Quum audiſſet inter pueros, *quos in Syria Herodes Rex Judæorum intra bimatum juſſit interfici*, filium quoque ejus occiſum, ait, "Melius eſt Herodis porcum eſſe quam filium." Saturnal. Lib. II. cap. iv. Now although Macrobius is far too modern to be produced as a valid evidence in this matter, and his ſtory is magnified with an erroneous circumſtance; yet the cited paſſage ſerves to prove, how univerſally notorious was the murder of the children in Bethlehem, which was committed by Herod's orders.—Voltaire, either from ignorance and inconſiderateneſs, or from diſhoneſty, aſſerts (Diction. philoſoph. articl. Chriſtianiſme), that 14,000 children muſt have loſt their lives in this maſſacre. If this were true, the ſilence of Joſephus would be truly a very important objection to the veracity of St. Matthew's narrative: and with this view Voltaire makes the aſſertion, who always ſhews himſelf an inveterate enemy of revealed, and not rarely of natural, religion alſo.—But Bethlehem was a very ſmall place; ſcarcely two thouſand perſons exiſted in it and in its dependant diſtrict. Now the male children alone were put to death; conſequently in this maſſacre not more than fifty at moſt were ſlain. In the deſcription of the life of ſuch a tyrant this was ſo trifling an act of cruelty, that it was but of ſmall conſequence in the hiſtory of his bloody government. See Büſching's 'Harmony of the evangeliſts,' I. 216. 217. of the original.

[d] Chap. ii.

himſelf, who takes occaſion from it to throw out the accuſation, that he had there learned the arts of magic [e].—That Jeſus was crucified under Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governour in Judea, is likewiſe related by Tacitus [f].—The account of John the Baptiſt, who was unjuſtly put to death by Herod Antipas the Tetrarch [g], is found alſo in Joſephus [h]. The coincidence is remarkable. The Jewiſh hiſtorian relates that Herod had married his brother Philip's wife: and this very cir-

[e] See Origen's work againſt Celſus.

[f] Annal. Lib. XV. cap. xliv. p. 279. edit. Antwerp. 1607. fol. Nero put the guilt of the terrible fire at Rome, as Tacitus here relates, on the Chriſtians. 'Auctor nominis ejus, continues he, (namely, Chriſtiani) Chriſtus, qui Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum ſupplicio affectus erat.' The agreement of many more circumſtances of this laſt ſuffering of Jeſus with the accounts of foreign writers is ſhewn by Lardner in his Credibility of the G. H. p. 1. vol. i. 299 and following pages. 1ſt edit.

[g] Matth xiv. 1—12.

[h] Antiq. Lib. XVIII. cap. v. §. 1, 2. p. 883, 884.

cumſtance

cumſtance is aſſerted by St. Matthew to have been the cauſe of John's execution. Immediately after he informs us, that the Jews pronounced the overthrow which Herod had ſuffered, to have been a divine puniſhment for his having ſlain John, who was ſurnamed the Baptiſt. Κτανων γαρ τουτον Ἡρωδης, αγαθον ανδρα και τους Ιουδαιους κελευοντα, αρετην επασκουντας και τη προς αλληλους δικαιοσυνη και προς τον Θεον ευσεβεια χρωμενους βαπτισμῳ συνιεναι. *For Herod had put to death this man; a pious perſon who exhorted the Jews to practice virtue, to ſhew fidelity to one another and reverence towards God, and with ſuch hearts to come to be baptized.* In exact coincidence are deſcribed the doctrines and behaviour of John by the Evangeliſts[i].—St. Luke curſorily relates[k], that the Emperour Claudius baniſhed

[i] Matth. iii. 1. ii. 5—10. Mark i. 1—5. Luke iii. 1—14.

[k] Acts xviii. 1, 2.

the Jews from Rome: and Suetonius gives us the ſame account[l], Judæos, ſays he, impulſore Chreſto aſſidue tumultuantes Roma expulit[m].—The perſon whom St. Peter raiſed from the dead at Joppa, was named Tabitha or Dorcas[n]: and it appears from Joſephus that this name (which ſeems to imply ſomething tender) was actually at that time in common uſe[o].—According to St. Luke's information[p] a great dearth prevailed throughout all Judea[q], in the reign of Claudius: Joſephus ſpeaks of the ſame, and deſcribes it as ſo terrible, that a great multitude

[l] Vita Claudii.

[m] Comp. Lardner's Jewiſh and heathen teſtimonies, vol. i.

[n] Act ix. 36.

[o] See Ottii Animadverſiones in Joſephum, Oper. edit. Haverc. vol. ii. p. 313.

[p] Acts xi. 28, 29.

[q] Ὅλη οἰκουμένη is ſometimes uſed in ſcriptural language for a particular country only. See Lardner's Credib. of the G. H. Part I. vol. i. 521 and following pages. 1ſt. edit.

of

of perſons died of hunger [r].—The tragical end of King Herod Agrippa [s] is related by St. Luke [t] and Joſephus [u] with ſo much harmony, that had the latter been a Chriſtian, one would have certainly believed that he intended to write a commentary on that narrative. This haughty monarch put off the Tyrians and Sidonians, who ſolicited a peace with him, until a certain day [w].

And

[r] Antiq. XX. cap. ii. § 6. p. 960. coll. cap. v. §. 2. p. 965.

[s] This Herod was the ſon of Ariſtobulus, and grandſon of Herod the Great. By the favour of the emperours Caligula and Claudius he was raiſed to royal dignity; and almoſt all the lands which his grand-father had poſſeſſed were by degrees beſtowed upon him. Joſephus Antiq. XVIII. cap. vii. §. 10. p. 896, 897. XIX. cap. v. §. 1. p. 943.

[t] Acts xii. 20—23.

[u] Antiq. Lib. XIX. cap. viii. §. 2. p. 650, 651.

[w] Joſephus has not mentioned this particular circumſtance. But he informs us, that the termination of the king's life ſucceeded a feſtal day, which had been appointed in honour of the emperour. From this circumſtance we may conceive why Herod put off the

the

And upon a ſet day[x] *Herod, arrayed in royal apparel*[y]*, ſat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a ſhout, ſaying, It is the voice of a God, and not of a man*[z]*! And immediately the angel of the Lord ſmote him*[a]*, becauſe*

the ambaſſadors from Tyre and Sidon to that expreſs day; namely, that he might ſhew himſelf with ſo much greater pomp to the people.

[x] Joſephus determines it more particularly. It was the ſecond day of the Feſtival, which was celebrated at Cæſarea in honour of the emperour.

[y] A robe embroidered with ſilver, from which rays of the ſun reflected a dazzling ſplendor, which ſet all the ſpectators in aſtoniſhment. Joſephus.

[z] His flatterers (ſays Joſephus who prolongs this ſhout to an improbable extent) named him *a God*, and entreated him to be propitious to them, ſaying, *Heretofore we have honoured you as a man: but now we acknowledge, that you are exalted above mortal nature.*

[a] Joſephus has inſerted here a ſuperſtitious ſtory: that Herod perceived an owl ſitting on a certain cord over his head, and conſequently held it to be an unfortunate omen. The fact itſelf he thus relates: that immediately afterwards the king was ſeized with a violent illneſs, and caried to his palace.

he gave not God the glory[b]*: and he was eaten of worms*[c]*, and gave up the ghoſt*[d]. Both hiſtorians relate the fact, as to the chief particulars, in the ſame manner. St. Luke deſcribes the pride of the king, as well as the nature of his illneſs more circumſtantially; and omits the ſuperſtitious addition of the owl, which is related by Joſephus. A proof, that St. Luke ſurpaſſes in fidelity, accuracy, and judgment even this learned hiſtorian of the Jews.—When St. Paul, in an uproar which the Jews at Jeruſalem excited againſt him, was taken priſoner, the Roman Chiliarch, ac-

[b] The very ſame cauſe is aſſigned by Joſephus, namely, becauſe Herod had not puniſhed the blaſphemous flattery of the people.

[c] Joſephus has not deſcribed the illneſs ſo circumſtantially. The king, ſays he, felt violent pains about the heart, and in the bowels. St. Luke determines the cauſe more ſcientifically. The pain in the bowels proceeded from worms, by which he was eaten.

[d] After he had been continually tormented during five days by dreadful pains in his bowels, he expired. Joſephus.

cording

cording to St. Luke's relation, demanded of him, *Art not thou that Egyptian, who a ſhort time ago, madeſt an uproar and leddeſt out into the wilderneſs four thouſand murderers*[e]? Joſephus explains to us this hiſtory, which St. Luke has mentioned only caſually[f]. An Egyptian[g] pretended during the government of Felix (conſequently at the time mentioned by St. Luke) that he was a prophet; led with him into the wilderneſs a multitude of thirty thouſand men; and marched againſt Jeruſalem, promiſing, that the walls of the city ſhould fall down immediately at his command; but was attacked by Felix, and eſcaped with a ſmall part of his army.—Of this remarkable harmony with foreign hiſ-

[e] Acts xxi. 38.

[f] De bello Judaico, Lib. II. cap. xiii. §. 5. p. 177, 178. Antiq. Lib. XX. cap. viii. §. 6. p. 972, 973.

[g] Joſephus alſo has no where given us the name of this Impoſtor, but only ſpoken of him under the appellation of 'the Egyptian.'

torians

torians I will produce only two further examples, and theſe on account of their oppoſite characters.—St. Paul, according to the Acts of the Apoſtles[h], in his ſpeech before the governour Felix and his wife Druſilla diſcourſes on the virtues of juſtice and chaſtity, and on the judgment hereafter to be holden on men for the violation of them. It muſt appear ſurpriſing to a reflecting reader why the Apoſtle did not here ſpeak on the fundamental articles of Chriſtianity, on the reſurrection of Jeſus, &c.; and what reaſon could have induced him to ſelect the above-mentioned virtues in particular for the ſubject of his diſcourſe. Tacitus and Joſephus clear up this difficulty, and explain the cauſe. According to their information the character of Felix is infamous, on account of the extortions which he had

[h] xxiv. 24, 25.

com-

committed in Judea, and of the ſcandalous commerce in which he lived with Druſilla, the wife of King Azizus, whom he ſeduced and married, while her huſband was ſtill alive[i]. With this character the narration of St. Luke is perfectly concordant. St. Paul ſpeaks before Felix and Druſilla of the judgments of God on injuſtice and unchaſtity. What could have been more terrible to ſuch an audience? Felix trembled at the diſcourſe! Nevertheleſs he held ſeveral conferences with the Apoſtle, becauſe he harboured the mean deſign of extorting money from him[k]. What elſe could be expected from a

[i] Tacitus hiſtoriarum, Lib. V. cap. ix. p. 428. edit. cit. Claudius ... Judæam provinciam equitibus Romanis aut libertis permiſit, e quibus Antonius Felix, per omnem ſævitiam ac libidinem jus regium ſervili ingenio exercuit, Druſilla Cleopatræ et Antonii nepte in matrimonium accepta. The hiſtory of this Druſilla is related by Joſephus more circumſtantially. Antiq. Lib. XX. cap. vii. §. 1, 2. p. 969, 970.

[k] Ver. 26.

man

man who lived in the public exerciſe of ſuch violent injuſtice and adulterous marriage? This hiſtory in a two-fold manner confirms the credibility of the ſcriptural writers; it ſhews how little St. Paul ſuppreſſed the truth even when his temporal intereſt ſeemed to require it; and how accurately St. Luke's narratives harmonize with the accounts of foreign hiſtorians.—How honourable, on the other hand, is the conduct which St. Luke[1] attributes to Gallio, the Roman proconſul in Achaia! What juſtice, impartiality, prudence, and mild diſpoſition ſhine forth in his anſwer to the accuſation of the Jews againſt St. Paul! "If it concerned an unjuſt or wicked action, reaſon would demand that I ſhould ſupport you. But as the conteſt concerns words, names, and your law, it is your own buſineſs. I will be no judge in ſuch

[1] Acts xviii. 14—16.

matters."

matters." And this agrees exactly with the honourable picture of him which foreign writers have drawn[m].

Such a perfect coincidence with foreign contemporary hiſtorians in ſuch trifling events, and in circumſtances which are related only curſorily, eſtabliſhes not only the authenticity of theſe writings, but is alſo a palpable proof of the *integrity* and *credibility* of their authors. Not leſs remarkable are the *characters* of the Goſpel-hiſtory, whom we find numerous and very diſtinct. The writers are evidently devoid of every ſpecies of art; yet the perſons whom they introduce act ſo naturally and conſiſtently, that we feel they are characters drawn from life.—Pilate is convinced that the political accuſations againſt Jeſus are perfectly groundleſs; he attempts re-

[m] Nemo mortalium uni tam dulcis eſt quam hic omnibus. Seneca, nat. quæſt. l. 4. Tacitus Annal. Lib. XV. extr. p. 290.

peatedly

peatedly to acquit him; yet not only againſt his own conviction, but even againſt his inclination, ſuffers him to be ſcourged, and even crucified: and all from the dread of being accuſed to Cæſar by the Jews. What a ſtriking portrait of an unprincipled courtier!—who moreover (as was the caſe of Pilate, according to Tacitus) had been guilty of many exactions, and therefore found it neceſſary to cover one act of injuſtice and cruelty by another.—Judas Iſcariot commits a crime of the foulest nature; he betrays his maſter, benefactor and friend for the paltry ſum of a few pieces of ſilver. Notwithſtanding the conciliatory, mild and amiable warning of his Lord he remains fixed in his barbarous determination, puts himſelf at the head of the murderers, goes boldly into the preſence of his friend, and uſes the moſt tender mark of friendſhip as the ſignal of treachery. The language of his

friend which might have been thought ſufficient to have melted the moſt frozen heart, *Judas, betrayeſt thou me—with a kiſs?* even this does not make him alter his reſolution. His conduct probably, as we are taught by the event, was influenced by a hope, that his Lord would find means to liberate himſelf by thoſe miraculous powers, which he had ſeen him ſo often exhibit. And when this expectation proved falſe, he proceeds to the magiſtracy of the Jews, confeſſes his crime, declares the innocence of Jeſus, returns the money, and hangs himſelf. A frightful ſcene! But how well does it harmonize with the character of a covetous wretch as Judas was, according to the Evangeliſts,—and of a man who had been for ſome years a conſtant eye-witneſs of the miniſtry and actions of Jeſus! A perſon of the fineſt talents could ſcarcely contrive a deceit ſo conſiſtently: it was certainly totally impoſſible to one whoſe mind was devoid of

cultivation,

cultivation, and whoſe employment from infancy had been the buſineſs of a fiſherman.

St. Peter is involved in a crime almoſt ſimilar. But the event is perfectly different. A look of his friend recalls him; and awakens the nobler ſentiments of repentance, and confidence in the favour of his Lord. How accurately does this accord with the ſource of his crime, as given by the Evangeliſt! He ſinned not from an eſtabliſhed and predominant evil inclination; but from temerity and inordinate paſſion.—Among all the writers of the New Teſtament none uſe arguments drawn from the love of honour more copiouſly, no one warns againſt pride[n] more ſtrongly, or exhorts more forcibly to heroic courage than St. Peter; this Peter who is continually diſtinguiſhed by the Evangeliſts for re-

[n] 1 Pet. v. 5, 6.

ſolution, heroic courage, and love of honour.

St. John alſo at firſt deſerts his Maſter, but ſoon returns, follows him into the palace of the High Prieſt, accompanies him to the croſs, remains there until he had expired, and takes upon himſelf the duties of a ſon towards the mother of his friend. And ſcarcely is the rumour heard that the grave is empty, but he is one of the firſt who haſten thither. We could expect no other conduct from a perſon who poſſeſſed a heart ſo tender, ſo ſenſible, and ſo truly affectionate towards Jeſus, as is attributed to St. John in the evangelical hiſtory.

St. Thomas, after the reſurrection of Jeſus, behaves not leſs agreeably to his accuſtomed reſolution, which degenerated almoſt to obſtinacy. We ſee here the very ſame perſon who formerly, when all the others oppoſed Jeſus' return to Judea, alone aroſe and encouraged

couraged his fellow diſciples[o], *Let us alſo go, that we may die with him*[p].

And laſtly, by what means were the Apoſtles, unlettered fiſhermen, enabled to draw ſuch a character as is the character of Jeſus; ſince it has not a parallel either in the hiſtory of their own country or of any other? Wherefore did they attribute in particular ſuch mild, patient virtues to their Meſſiah, in whom the whole nation expected an enterpriſing and ſucceſsful warrior?

Many farther proofs of *Integrity* of the like kind may be found in their books.—The writers of the New Teſtament diſcover the utmoſt abhorrence of the crime of deceit and diſhoneſty; and preach an integrity which does not allow men to utter even an indif-

[o] John xi. 16.

[p] See Secker's Sermons; and alſo Lardner on the internal marks of the credibility of the N. T. in the 'Memoirs of the life and writings of the late reverend Nath. Lardner.' London. 1769.

ferent untruth[q]. — They deliver convincing proofs that they themſelves poſſeſſed this virtue, which they inculcate on others under the penalty of the divine wrath. They no where break out in their own praiſe; and when St. Paul was under the neceſſity of relating his extraordinary endowments before the falſe apoſtles, with what timid modeſty does he ſpeak[r]! They do not ſuppreſs even their own failings; they relate the aſtoniſhment and ſtupidity of the Apoſtles at the diſcourſes of Jeſus[s]; the diſgraceful infidelity which they manifeſted towards him under his ſufferings[t]; the denial of St. Peter[u]; his diſſimulation at Antioch[w]; the indiſcreet

[q] Rom. xii. 9. Epheſ. iv. 25. 1 Peter i. 22. ii. 21, 22.
[r] 2 Corinth. xii.
[s] Luke xviii. 31—34.
[t] Matth. xxvi. 56.
[u] Matth. xxvi. 69—75.
[w] Gal. ii. 11—21.

and

and furious zeal of St. Paul[x].—They eſtabliſh no ſeparate ſects. No one of them puts himſelf at the head of a party. On the contrary, they caution men moſt earneſtly againſt all party ſpirit; and unanimouſly exhort them to receive and to reverence no other than the inviſible Jeſus as their only Head, their Teacher, and their Redeemer[y]. — They relate without diſguiſe facts which evil-minded perſons might eaſily pervert to the diſadvantage of their hiſtory and doctrine; That, for inſtance, the diſciples of Jeſus could not heal a ſick man[z]; that Jeſus, during his paſſion, had endured violent ſorrow and agony[a]; that he performed no miracles at Nazareth[b]; that on the day of Pentecoſt ſome of the ſpectators accuſed the Apoſtles of drun-

[x] Acts ix. Rom. ix. 2.
[y] 1 Cor. i. 10—16, &c.
[z] Matth. xvii. 16.
[a] Matth. xxvi. 38, 39.
[b] Mark vi. 4, 5.

kneſs[c]; that Paul and Barnabas quarrelled and ſeparated[d]. If their cauſe had been an impoſture, they would indiſputably have ſuppreſſed every thing of this nature.—Again, the doctrines which they preached were directly hoſtile to the ruling taſte of their times, and to the darling paſſions of all mankind: the overthrow of idolatrous worſhip; the abrogation of the Moſaic law; ſalvation through the mediation of one who had been crucified; the extirpation of all inordinate and extravagant appetites; a perfectly ſpotleſs and heroic courage. And the whole manner in which they exhibited their doctrines and hiſtory bears the viſible ſtamp of the greateſt honeſty. Without any anxiety to prove the truth of their narratives; without any rhetorical arts to recommend them to others; without any artful and con-

[c] Acts ii. 13. [d] Acts xv. 39.

cealed

ceaſed obſcurity, they mention their hiſtory as a matter which muſt be either known to all their contemporaries, or which could be examined and its truth or falſhood diſcovered without much trouble. The confidence and ſure conviction with which they write is particularly apparent where they ſpeak of the exerciſe of their miraculous powers. They relate theſe aſtoniſhing facts without any ornaments of language, or oratorical flights, but with the moſt common expreſſions, and in the moſt conciſe and ſimple manner; when they ſpeak of them, they bring to the remembrance of their contemporaries the artful religious deceits with which the heathen prieſts impoſed on the people, and led them like irrational animals*; they appeal to theſe their ſupernatural gifts in oppoſition to thoſe which they ſharply reproved; and this, when ad-

* 1 Cor. xii. 1, 2.

dreſſing

dreſſing themſelves to communities in which they had many perſonal enemies [f]. In ſhort, they ſpeak with ſuch certainty, with ſo much ſelf-conviction, and with ſuch confidence, of the truth of their hiſtory, that aſſuredly we can no longer confide in any hiſtorian whatever, if we entertain the leaſt doubt concerning the honeſty of the writers of the New Teſtament.

SECT. VI.

They relate Events which happened in their own Times.

THE writers of the New Teſtament relate their hiſtory *at a time* when it was almoſt *impoſſible to have forged it.* —They inform us not of events which happened at the other extremity of the world many ages ago: as that a perſon perfectly unknown to poſterity had,

[f] 1 Cor. xii. xiv. Gal. ii. 1—4.

many

many centuries before their times, performed wonderful things in Britain. No, on the contrary—at Jeruſalem they relate events which they aſſert to have happened at Jeruſalem.—Events which took place in the times, and, in part, before the eyes, of perſons who were then alive [s].—Events which tended to injure, and reflect diſhonour on, the principal perſons in the city.—Theſe events they relate not in obſcure corners of the town, in the preſence of one or two inſignificant perſons: but in public places, in the ſchools of the Jews, before the higheſt tribunal of the nation. In the courts of juſtice of the Jewiſh kings and Roman governours they relate—that Jeſus, who in the preſence of all the people and of the chief and moſt learned men of their nation had proved himſelf by miraculous actions to be the long expected

[s] Acts ii. 22—24.

Meſſiah,

Meſſiah, had given to the human race the moſt noble and ſalutary doctrines, and led a moſt holy, innocent, and beneficent life, had been perſecuted with ferocious cruelty by the chiefs of the people, until they brought him to the croſs; that this ſame Jeſus, nevertheleſs, a few days after his death had ariſen, and had been ſeen at Jeruſalem by many perſons. This the Apoſtles avow freely, publicly, and in the preſence of men who flouriſhed at the time they aſſert their hiſtory to have happened. They are thrown into priſon, laid in irons, ſcourged, ſome of them put to death, and the others threatened with a ſimilar fate. But not a ſingle perſon ariſes to ſhew the falſhood of their narrative.—They not only relate this viva voce, but alſo publiſh it in writings, addreſſed to places where conſiderable Jewiſh communities then exiſted; and at a time when they univerſally oppoſed the ſpread of Chriſ-

tianity with the greateſt violence.—Four men publiſh accounts of theſe events at different times. None of the ſucceeding hiſtorians would certainly ever have ventured to have laid them again before the public, if the narrative of the preceding had already been acknowledged falſe.—And this their hiſtory is the relation of public and very intereſting events, of a tendency no leſs important than the reformation of the whole exiſting world.—A man muſt not only be deceived, or a notorious impoſtor, to utter falſhoods under ſuch circumſtances, but abſolutely inſane. We muſt, therefore, pronounce the writers of the New Teſtament either to have been out of their ſenſes; —or grant—that they did not forge their narrative, but, as to themſelves, were perfectly convinced of its truth.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

They appeal to notorious proofs.

HAD they not been convinced of the truth of what they relate, but impoſtors,—they would by no means have appealed to ſuch proofs as depend only on the *organs of ſenſe*, and which might have been *eaſily examined* by any, even the moſt ſimple perſon. In order to prove the truth of their hiſtory and doctrine, they do not appeal, like Mahomet, to ſecret viſions of ſpirits, nocturnal journies to heaven, or things which, as he pretended, took place in ſecret.—They appeal to *Mirales* which they had performed in the preſence of their auditors, and in the midſt of large communities. 'My preaching among you conſiſted not in the ſubtile diſcourſes of ſophiſtry, but in proofs of the miraculous power of the Holy

Holy Ghoſt[h].—God has evinced that this doctrine came from Him, through miracles and through a variety of miraculous gifts[i].'—And yet more—They aſſert that they had even imparted to their hearers the power of working miracles; that only by laying their hands on them they had enabled them to ſpeak fluently foreign languages which they had never learned, to heal the ſick by a mere word, and even to propheſy. 'I, who have given you the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and wrought miracles among you, have I preached to you the law of Moſes, or the doctrine of faith[k]?—To one of you is given the gift of languages, to another the gift of healing ſickneſſes, to a third yet other miraculous powers[l].'

[h] 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.

[i] Heb. ii. 3, 4. See alſo 2 Cor. xii. 12. Galat. iii. 5. 1 Theſſ. i. 5.

[k] Galat. iii. 5.

[l] 1 Cor. xii. xiii.

—St.

—St. Paul appeals in the preſence of large communities, at Corinth, a town of conſiderable conſequence, and much frequented; in Galatia; and before Jewiſh converts, who were by no means well diſpoſed towards him; before communities, in which were his moſt bitter enemies, who had actually formed themſelves into a party againſt him; in Epiſtles, wherein he gives them ſharp reproofs,—appeals to *miracles* which he had performed before them; and to *miraculous gifts*, which he had imparted, and which continued to exiſt among them. Still more than all this, he himſelf announces, in his firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians, a new miracle which he would perform, in proof of his divine miſſion, on an inceſtuous perſon, though at a diſtance, by inflicting on him a ſevere diſeaſe[m].—Now, in theſe caſes, deceit or fanati-

[m] 1 Cor. v. 3—5.

ciſm

ciſm is abſolutely impoſſible. For, notwithſtanding theſe circumſtances, it would have been certainly impoſſible for the Apoſtle ever to have perſuaded the Corinthians, Galatians, and Hebrews that they could ſpeak foreign languages, with which they in fact had no acquaintance; that they could heal the ſick, whom they in fact could not heal; or that the inceſtuous perſon was fallen into a ſevere illneſs, when they knew him to be perfectly well. St. Paul and the other writers of the New Teſtament, muſt have been abſolutely out of their ſenſes if they had ſpoken in this manner without foundation and truth. And ſuppoſing that they had done ſo, like the modern pretenders to inſpiration, who in London promiſed to raiſe the dead to life; then the ſame effects would have followed in the former caſe, which happened in the latter. They would have been conſidered as viſionaries and

madmen, their religion as abſurdity and impoſture. Now as this did not happen, but on the contrary their perſons and religion found ſuch credit and extenſive reception, this fact is therefore a perfectly convincing and incontrovertible proof,—I might juſtly aſſert, of the *hiſtorical certainty of their miracles*, and of the *divinity of their religion;* but here I content myſelf with ſaying—of the *entire credibility of theſe men.*

SECT. VIII.

They had nothing to expect but temporal diſadvantages.

AND what was there which could have inſtigated them to forge theſe circumſtances, and to propagate them with ſuch perſeverance?—What had they to expect from their evidence? A miſerable life; bitter railleries and

ſcorn from the philoſophers of their time; cruel perſecutions from the Jews, from the heathen prieſts, merchants, and magiſtracy. For the hiſtory which they publiſhed muſt neceſſarily have appeared abſurd to witlings and imaginary philoſophers; and had a tendency not leſs important than the entire overthrow of the whole idolatrous worſhip of the Gentiles, and the abolition of the religion of the Jews.—But, it may be urged, were not theſe conſequences of their preaching unexpected? No: they themſelves foreſaw that their doctrine would be ridiculed by the philoſophers[n] of their time, and perſecuted by the powerful with the ſword and the croſs[o].

[n] 1 Cor. i. 23.

[o] Rom. viii. 35—39. 1 Cor. xv. 19.

SECT. IX.

They ſuffered for the truth of their narration every thing, even death. —And brought many of their contemporaries to the ſure conviction of its truth.

AFTER all that has been ſaid, ſhould any ſuſpicion of diſhoneſty ſtill remain, it muſt inſtantly vaniſh when we reflect that theſe witneſſes ſuffered ſo many afflictions and ſufferings; ſuch bitter and mortifying affronts; many of them the moſt grievous torments and the moſt painful death with ſuch compoſure and truly heroic tranquillity, for the ſake of their evidence, and ſtill continued to ſupport it even to their laſt breath,—and that by their teſtimony, they ſo certainly convinced a vaſt number of their contemporaries, who, without any trouble, could have proved

proved the truth or falſhood of their hiſtory, that even theſe likewiſe ſacrificed their temporal happineſs and their lives to its truth.—During the lifetime of ſome of them, that is, before the concluſion of the firſt century, numerous communities of Chriſtians were already formed in all the three parts of the then known world. Their doctrine found great ſupport in Aſia, at Jeruſalem, Antioch, Epheſus, Smyrna, Laodicea, Cæſarea, &c.: in Africa, at Alexandria: in Europe, at Rome the metropolis of the world, Corinth, Theſſalonica, Philippi: and in many other great, civiliſed and flouriſhing places[p]. Theſe

[p] See Benſon's Hiſtory of the firſt planting of the Chriſtian religion. London, 1744, vol. ii. in 4to. Fabricii, Salutaris lux toti mundo exoriens, Hamburg, 1731, in 4to. in which is given a catalogue of thoſe Chriſtian communities which can be proved to have been planted in the time of the Apoſtles.—Among the firſt converſions none is more remarkable than that of St. Paul, Acts ix. and xxvi. 1—23. Lyttleton has ſhewn in his 'Obſervations on the converſion and

Theſe communities did not conſiſt of merely low, mean, and ignorant people: but many great and learned men acknowledged themſelves to belong to their communion. Among their firſt followers are found the Proconſul Sergius Paulus[q]; Dionyſius, a member of the council of Areopagus, together with his wife, and many other Athenians[r]; ſeveral perſons belonging to the court of the emperour Nero[s]; Eraſtus, chamberlain at Corinth[t]; ſome of the primates of Aſia[u]; and Juſtin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Ter-

apoſtleſhip of St. Paul, in a letter to Gilbert Weſt,' that this event cannot be attributed to the deceit of others, nor to the deceit or fanaticiſm of St. Paul himſelf; but that it is true, and conſequently an incontrovertible proof of the divinity of the Chriſtian religion.

[q] Acts xiii. 7—12.
[r] Acts xvii. 34.
[s] Philipp. iv. 22.
[t] Rom. xvi. 23.
[u] Acts xix. 31.

tullian,

tullian, Hegeſippus, Melito, Miltiades, Pantænus, Hippolitus Portuenſis, Ammonius and Origen: men, of whom ſome were Philoſophers, and accurately acquainted with the beſt writings, and all the learning of the Gentiles[w].

All theſe perſons lived at a time when, with inconſiderable trouble and without the application of much learning, they might have inquired into the truth or falſhood of the Chriſtian hiſtory. It deſerves to be remarked here, that even in the *third century* perſons were alive, who had communicated with the *contemporaries* of the Apoſtles; and conſequently might have derived the evidence for the truth or falſhood of thoſe events from the *firſt* ſource. St. John the Apoſtle lived until the year of Chriſt 100. Polycarp, his diſciple and moſt intimate friend, and who was perſonally acquainted with ſome

[w] See above, Part I. Book II.

of the other Apoſtles, until 167. His diſciple, Irenæus, who was in habits of intercourſe with many of the immediate contemporaries and ſcholars of the Apoſtles, lived until 202. Origen, the oracle of the Chriſtians, who was celebrated about this time at Alexandria, and was connected with the moſt conſiderable chriſtians in Egypt and in almoſt the whole of the Eaſt, had conſequently without doubt collected information on the Chriſtian hiſtory from many perſons, who, as well as Irenæus, had received their intelligence from the immediate contemporaries of the Apoſtles.—But the many thouſands who became Chriſtians in the *firſt century* were far better qualified for that inquiry: ſince Chriſtianity was preached at a time when learning of every kind flouriſhed under the government of the Romans; and received its origin in a country which at that period, though its governours and

and military concerns had frequent intercourſe with the Romans and with the moſt poliſhed nations of the world.

Theſe men, of whom ſome were diſtinguiſhed by rank and learning, and all in a condition to examine into the truth of the Chriſtian hiſtory with little or no trouble; who were educated in religions and cuſtoms (and who is ignorant of the power of cuſtom and education?) which Chriſtianity abſolutely rejected; received this hiſtory and embraced the religion.—A religion, which obliged them to change entirely their whole courſe of life, all their former actions and inclinations[x]; which every moment endangered their goods, their conſequence, and their lives. To this religion, which demanded nothing leſs than the ſacrifice of all their former modes of thinking, cuſtoms, and darling paſſions; to this

[x] Epheſ. iv. 17—24. v. 1—21.

religion,

religion, I ſay, they were ſo devoted, and embraced it with *ſo much zeal*, that multitudes ſacrificed to it all their comforts, wealth, peace, and conſequence; and, which is ſtill more, the love of their families: and, ſtill confeſſing its truth, ſuffered ſteadily and with a compoſure both tranquil and rational the moſt horrible tortures and the moſt painful death [y].

Here, therefore, we have another and very forcible proof of the credibility of the writers of the New Teſtament. A number of men, conſiſting of many hundreds and thouſands, among whom were ſeveral of conſiderable conſequence and learning, aroſe and teſtified with admirable conſtancy to the truth of facts, which they had every opportunity of knowing and proving. And this their teſtimony is equally as weighty as if they had left it in writing,

[y] See the following 1 and 2 Ch. of 2 Book.

and

and that writing had been tranſmitted down to us. "For," to uſe the words of Butler*, "were a fact expreſsly related by one or more ancient hiſtorians, and diſputed in after ages; that this fact is acknowledged to have been believed by great numbers of the age in which the hiſtorian ſays it was done, would be allowed an additional proof of ſuch fact, quite diſtinct from the expreſs teſtimony of the hiſtorian. The credulity of mankind is acknowledged: and the ſuſpicions of mankind ought to be acknowledged too; and their backwardneſs ever to believe, and greater ſtill to practice, what makes againſt their intereſt."

* Butler's Analogy of religion natural and revealed to the courſe of nature. p. 335, 336. Edit. 1791.

BOOK

BOOK II.

The wonderful Eſtabliſhment and Propagation of Chriſtianity, is a moſt convincing Proof of the entire Credibility of the Hiſtory of the New Teſtament, and of the Religion which it eſtabliſhes.

CHAP. I.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WONDERFUL PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

I. *Chriſtianity ſpreads itſelf almoſt immediately over the whole World.*

IT is truly aſtoniſhing how widely Chriſtianity had extended itſelf almoſt immediately at its firſt riſe. In leſs than fifty years numerous Chriſtian com-

communities had been eſtabliſhed in every part, and in the moſt conſiderable cities, of the then known world[z]. The little ſeed was already grown up to a lofty and wide-ſpreading tree; and in the two following centuries it caſt its beneficent ſhade continually wider towards the Eaſt and Weſt. In the beginning of the fourth century the whole of the great and extenſive empire of the Romans was filled with Chriſtians, who held the moſt conſiderable employments in the ſtate. The very courts of the heathen emperours contained men of ſcarcely any other perſuaſion. Under the perſecution of Dioclefian, a whole city in Phrygia was burnt, becauſe all the inhabitants had embraced that faith. Some of the emperours, (as Maxentius, for inſtance) were obliged to ſpare the Chriſtians on account of the people at Rome. It

[z] See above, p. 340, 341.

was

was this externally flouriſhing ſtate of the Church, from the diſſentions and vices which it occaſioned, that became the principal cauſe of the terrible perſecutions of the Chriſtians in the fourth century[a]. Laſtly, in the perſon of Conſtantine the Great, Chriſtianity aſcended even the imperial throne.

II. *It prevailed without the Aſſiſtance of any temporal Power.*

THIS rapid and ſucceſsful progreſs was not effected by any human power. No prince, king, or emperour had adopted it. No ſword was drawn in its cauſe; no armies took the field; no territories were conquered. It could neither procure riches for its followers, nor exalt them to employments of conſequence. On the contrary, amidſt poverty and obſcurity; and intirely de-

[a] See the beautiful extract from Euſebius in Dr. Semler's Hiſt. eccl. l. 100.

void

void of all temporal influence and greatneſs did Chriſtianity exiſt in the world until the fourth century. Inſtead of being ſupported and extended by earthly power and magnificence, it was rather obſtructed by that very cauſe. Its exaltation to the throne was the epoch of its decline both externally and internally.

III. *Through thirteen poor, inconſiderable, unlearned, and almoſt unknown men.*

ABOUT thirteen men[b], who were members of a nation, deſpiſed by the Romans and Greeks; of the meaneſt extraction; brought up from their infancy in the employment of fiſhermen; formed in no ſchools of the rhetoricians; unacquainted with any part of the wiſdom of the philoſophers, or of

[b] See above, Part II. B. I.

the

the knowledge of the learned; abandoned; perſecuted; hated by all, even by their relatives;—theſe men ariſe, relate the hiſtory of Jeſus, aſſert his reſurrection and his numerous miracles; and on this foundation preach Chriſtianity. And Jews, Greeks, Romans, and the whole world embrace their doctrine.

IV. *Amidſt the moſt dangerous internal diſturbances and diſtractions.*

MANY philoſophers and ſcholars alſo became Chriſtians. Theſe men began in the ſecond century, by introducing their fancies and errors, to deform the amiable ſimplicity of this religion; to obſcure its ſplendour, and to diminiſh its ſtrength. And now appear various Heretics; this ſociety, which had been moſt cordially united in the bands of love, is ſevered into numerous ſects; genuine chriſtian virtue conti-

nually decreaſes; and ſuperſtition, fanaticiſm and vice occupy its place. Thus, ſo early as the beginning of the ſecond century, the Chriſtian Religion was compelled to ſtruggle with dangerous enemies even in its *own boſom!*

V. *Under the moſt cruel external perſecutions, and the oppoſition of the whole world.*

FROM *without*, if not more dangerous yet more powerful and terrible enemies united themſelves againſt it. Chriſtianity had an object no leſs important than the overthrow of the ſuperſtition of the Jews, and the idolatrous worſhip of the Gentiles; which comprehended the whole of the exiſting world. It was therefore oppoſed by all. The powerful and rich Jews who were ſpread over every region of the Roman empire, at Jeruſalem, in Paleſtine, at Damaſcus, at Alexandria, at

at Rome, employed all their power and artifice to extirpate the Chriſtian name from the face of the earth. The Apoſtles were many times ſcourged and baniſhed; St. Stephen ſtoned; the Chriſtians expelled from Jeruſalem; St. James beheaded; St. Paul chaſed from one place to another, impriſoned, ſcourged; and, in a word, the wrath of the Roman magiſtracy together with the fury of the people, every thing was ſummoned up in order to choak the tender plant in its firſt ſhooting.—Among the *Gentiles* religion was a part of their polity, and ſo interwoven with the ſtate and civil government, that the governours and magiſtracy oppoſed any alteration of the eſtabliſhed religion as ſtrenuouſly as they would have reſiſted the overthrow of their own authority and the deſtruction of the ſtate. Theſe magiſtrates were alſo in general *the Prieſts* of Paganiſm. And where this was not the caſe, yet even there the

whole body of the prieſthood derived their ſubſiſtence from this impoſture; obtained from it their high civil privileges, were very numerous and very powerful in the ſtate; and ſtood, from the above mentioned cauſes, in the moſt intimate connection with the magiſtracy. The people blindly followed theſe conductors. Their education, and cuſtoms inherited from father to ſon, made the worſhip of idols a ſecond nature to them; and their vicious appetites could find nothing more convenient or more deſirable than a religion which ſold all the favours of the Gods for ſacrifices, incenſe, purifications and ſimilar corporeal ceremonies. They who were called *Philoſophers* at that time were ſo violently captivated with that to which they applied the term wiſdom, namely, with their metaphyſical fancies, ſceptical follies, and rhetorical arts; that they ſet in motion all the powers of ridicule, and all the artifices

artifices of ſophiſtry to baniſh a religion from the world, which ſo ſimplified the whole ſyſtem of wiſdom and eſtabliſhed it in ſuch a manner as to be comprehended by every capacity, and founded all the happineſs of the human race on one that had been crucified. Thus then *all* that was powerful in the Heathen world became moſt zealouſly hoſtile to the Chriſtian faith. From the time of Nero, the emperours of Rome enacted laws, intended for the extirpation of Chriſtianity. This tyrant commanded its followers to be ſewn up in the ſkins of beaſts, and theſe ſaturated with oil, to be lighted up by night for a public ſpectacle. But it was not the cruel Nero alone who perſecuted the Chriſtians; even the mild Trajan, and the philanthropic Marcus Antoninus ordered that they ſhould be compelled by impriſonments and torments to renounce their reli-

gion[c]. In oppoſition to all theſe numerous and princely powers, in oppoſition to the whole Roman empire, were placed theſe poor, unlettered fiſhermen, joined by a Paul equally poor and inconſiderable. And—they not only defended themſelves, but—even conquered: overthrew the united ſubtlety and power of emperours, kings, governours, generals, merchants, ſophiſts, and of the people; and on the ruins of Judaiſm and Paganiſm founded—the religion of Jeſus! It would have been apparently much eaſier for theſe thirteen men, alone and without any aſſiſtance, to have overthrown the whole Roman force, and to have placed themſelves on the imperial throne[d].

[c] See Franc. Balduini Ad edicta vett. principum Romanorum de Chriſtianis, Moſhemii Inſtitut. hiſt. eccleſ. maj., et Ruinarti Præf. ad acta martyrum.

[d] See Lyttleton On the Converſion and Apoſtleſhip of St. Paul, and Jortin's Diſcourſes concerning the truth of the Chriſtian religion, p. 87—116 of the 2d Edition.

VI.

VI. *And although exciting the repugnance of the human heart.*

BUT perhaps—it may be ſaid—they knew how to intereſt the ſinful inclinations of the human heart in their favour?—Directly on the contrary, Chriſtianity excites all theſe inclinations without exception againſt itſelf. And what is the power of kings and emperours, when compared with the enmity of the ruling paſſions of the human heart? The Religion of the New Teſtament announces the moſt irreconcilable hoſtility to pride, ambition, vanity, avarice, revenge, impurity, and every other ſinful, that is, univerſally-injurious inclination and appetite. It requires of its followers that they ſhall not poſſeſs any ſuch appetites and thoughts even in their hearts. It requires that they ſhall practice invariably and univerſally an unqualified,

unwearied, unrelaxed, and active philanthropy. It requires that they ſhall be cordially benevolent even to their enemies, and win and make them happy by acts of beneficence and bleſſings of every kind. It alſo requires us to ſacrifice all our innocent pleaſures and profits, in a word, all our temporal advantages, even health and life, to the general good of mankind, nay of our moſt mortal enemies; and ſuffer for their ſake every kind of calamity, trouble, danger, and torment. —It declares that neither any viva voce confeſſion of certain formularies, nor the exerciſe of any corporeal ceremonies; but that ſuch a virtue as is grounded in the heart, which continually acts, and inceſſantly increaſes, is the only mean whereby we can obtain the favor of the Divinity, and the bliſs of heaven. In this manner Chriſtianity raiſed againſt itſelf the ruling paſſions of the human heart, and—the whole

whole world. And, yet, this ſmall grain of muſtard-ſeed, as the author of our holy religion had many times propheſied, became a large tree, on whoſe branches the birds of the air lodged; and grew up, like the ſeed which is ſown, unobſerved, and rapidly to the full grain in the ear [e]. Chriſtianity converts millions in every part of the world; and though expoſed to continually increaſing dangers, extends itſelf abroad; and, laſtly, at the preſent day, is embraced and confeſſed by the tenth part of the human race [f].

[e] Matth. xiii. 31—33. Mark iv. 26—29.

[f] Robert Millar's Hiſtory of the propagation of Chriſtianity, London, 1731. 2 vols. in 8vo. contains much uſeful matter, particularly reſpecting the miſſions of Chriſtians into heathen countries: but it is only a compilation from well known books; it cannot always be depended upon; nor is it by any means complete.—The reader will find in Fabricii Salutaris lux Evangelii toti orbi exoriens, in 4to. an account of the writers on the hiſtory of Chriſtianity.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

That the old World was intolerant.

VOLTAIRE boldly aſſerts[g] that the Gentiles in general, and particularly the Romans, were by no means intolerant. 'Nothing,' he exclaims, 'was more ſocial than the heathen religion: The Romans permitted the exerciſe of every religion, and conſidered religious tolerance as one of the moſt ſalutary laws of the ſtate: This monſter, this peſt of the world, Intolerance, is a daughter of Chriſtianity!'

g Traité de la Tolerance, Si les Romains ont été tolérans.

SECT.

SECT. I.

Of the Egyptians, Grecians and Romans.

I. NOT to mention the old Perſians, who deſtroyed all the ſtatues in the temples of the Egyptians and Grecians; nor the Carthaginians, who were in the utmoſt degree jealous of the ſervice of the Gods of their ſtate—what do theſe adverſaries of Chriſtianity think of the inceſſant civil wars among the Egyptians? One province of the country waged war on another, becauſe the latter worſhipped the ox, the dog, the wolf, the cat, and other brute beaſts, as gods, whilſt the former ſlew and conſumed them! What of that eſtabliſhed law of the country which condemned to death the perſon who ſhould deſtroy one of the animals to which divine honours were paid? A Roman

A Roman, as Diodorus relates who was himſelf an eye-witneſs of the fact, had accidentally killed a cat, and was immediately put to death by the enraged people. From a ſimilar cauſe the inhabitants of the city Ombi became engaged in a quarrel with thoſe of Tentyra, which was conducted with ſo much violence, that the Tentyrans cut to pieces on the ſpot a citizen of Ombi, who had been taken priſoner, and ate him ſtill reaking with blood [h].

Summus utrinque
Inde furor vulgo, quod numina vicinorum
Odit uterque locus, quum ſolos credat habendos
Eſſe deos, quos ipſe colit [i].

II. If this be called tolerance the Grecians were alſo tolerant in a very high degree. At Athens every citizen

[h] See Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and particularly Juvenal's 15th Satire, in which he paints the ſuperſtition and intolerance of the Egyptians, and relates that horrible hiſtory which took place in his time.

[i] Juvenal, Sat. 15.

ſwore

ſwore an oath that he would acknowledge the religion of the country, and defend it againſt every other. Certain laws forbade men to diſpute concerning the gods, or to diſhonour them under very heavy, and in ſome caſes, mortal puniſhment[k]. And their ſeverity was felt by many of the moſt worthy men. Protagoras was driven into exile, becauſe in his writings he had merely called in queſtion the exiſtence of the gods; and his works were publicly burned[l]. Anaxagoras, the firſt who taught among them the doctrine of One Supreme Being, was condemned to death becauſe he named the ſun, which the Athenians worſhipped as a divinity, a burning fire[m]. And every one knows the fate of the greateſt of all the philoſophers of antiquity; who, on account of his purer and ex-

[k] Strobæus De republ. ſerm. 41. Petiti Leg. att.

[l] Cicero De nat. deor. I. 23.

[m] Diogenes Laertius II.

cellent

cellent doctrines concerning God and Providence, was compelled to drink the poiſoned bowl. His diſciple alſo, the noble Plato, who has ſo affectingly deſcribed the martyrdom of Socrates; even he gives, under the laws of the wiſe ſtate which he deſcribes, this command—let the calumniators of the gods be firſt reproved, and if that be of no avail, let them be puniſhed, even with death[n]. And this was the ruling ſentiment of all Greece, as is clearly evinced by what are called the holy, that is, the religious wars. At the time of Pericles, the Athenians waged war on the Lacedemonians, becauſe they had, in common with the Phocians, the ſuperintendance of the temple of Apollo at Delphi[o]. At another time, a ſimilar religious war was the pretext for Philip of Macedon to ſubjugate Greece. The Phocians had

[n] De Legibus X.

[o] Plutarch. in Pericle, Thucyd. I.

ap-

appropriated to themſelves a field dedicated to Apollo at Delphi. The council of Amphictyons pronounced them on this account guilty of ſacrilege; adjudged them to pay a certain ſum of money; and on their refuſing to pay it, war was ſolemnly proclaimed againſt them, in which all Greece took a part, and which continued with great violence during the ſpace of ten years[p]. And who is ignorant of the cruelties and terrible torments by which Antiochus Epiphanes wiſhed to compel the Jews to ſacrifice to idols, and to renounce their paternal religion?

III. But among the Romans, we are told, Intolerance was unknown; all ſects enjoyed under them the moſt perfect liberty of conſcience and religion. Yet was it one of the fundamental laws of the ſtate (of the XII tables), '*Deos peregrinos ne colunto;*'

[p] Diodorus Siculus XVI.

and

and Cicero, one of the greateſt orators and lawyers, reckoned it among the moſt neceſſary laws of every wiſe ſtate, 'Separatim nemo habeſſit deos, neve novos: ſed ne advenas, niſi publice adſcitos, privatim colunto[q].' When, in the year of the city 326, a great drought and infectious diſorder raged, ſuperſtition ſo far attained the ſuperiority, that on every ſide were ſeen new gods and new forms of divine ſervice. The government, therefore, enjoined the Ediles to be vigilant, 'Ne qui niſi Romani dii, neu quo alio more quam patrio colerentur[r].' In like manner, under great diſaſters, the ſtate was purified from foreign religions[s]. Mæcenas adviſed the Emperour Au-

[q] De Legibus II. 8.

[r] Livius Hiſtor. IV. 30.

[s] Livius Hiſtor. IX. 30. XXV. 1. XXXIX. 16, Quoties hoc patrum avorumque ætate, negotium eſt magiſtratibus datum, ut ſacra externa fieri vetarent, omnem diſciplinam ſacrificandi præterquam more Romano abolerent?

guſtus

guſtus to forbid not only atheiſm, but alſo all foreign divine-worſhip, both from religious and political principles. 'Worſhip,' ſaid he to him[t], 'the gods yourſelf, and compel others to do the ſame. Abhor all thoſe who would make any innovations in religion, and puniſh them.—Suffer no atheiſts, magicians, &c.'—Tiberius expelled from Rome all who were devoted to the Egyptian, Jewiſh, and in general, to any foreign divine-worſhip[u]: four thouſand of theſe men were, merely for the ſake of their religion, ſent to Sardinia to fight againſt the robbers, 'ſi ob gravitatem cœli interiiſſent, vile damnum;' and all the reſt were chaſed out of Italy[w]. I have already ſpoken of the hard and in part cruel perſecutions of the Chriſtians. Even the mild Trajan commanded Pliny to execute the Chriſ-

[t] Dio Caſſius, Lib. LII.
[u] Suetonii, Tiber. I. 36.
[w] Tacitus Annal. II. 85.

tians[x]. Not only the Romans, but alſo the Grecians, and in general all idolaters readily adopted foreign idolatrous worſhip: it was in fact a part of their religion; for they imagined that every nation, and every affair in the world had its peculiar god, and believed themſelves to be ſafe in proportion to the number of the gods that they worſhipped. But with ſo much greater ſeverity did they perſecute all foreign religions not eſtabliſhed by the ſtate; and more particularly the Chriſtian, becauſe it condemned all idolatrous worſhip, and all ſlaviſh adoration of the emperours. The laws, cuſtoms, and ſentiments of the Egyptians, Grecians, and Romans put this matter beyond all doubt.

x Plinii Epiſt. Lib. X. ep. xcvii.—Cornelii van Bynkerſhoek opuſcula, De cultu religionis peregrinæ apud vet. Roman. et Jo. Dan. ab Hoven Compenſia, Faſic. I. p. 33 ſ.

SECT.

SECT. II.

The doctrine of Chriſtianity on this ſubject.

CHRISTIANITY was the very firſt ſyſtem of religion which introduced among men an unlimited, enlightened and charitable toleration of all who profeſſed religious articles different from its own. It is true, that the Moſaic law tolerated ſtrangers, without compelling them to embrace the Iſraelitiſh religion; but they were obliged to renounce the worſhip of idols; and every idolater was puniſhed with death. A ſeverity which was rendered neceſſary by the exiſting ſituation of the world, and the vices and cruelties and aſſaſſinations, inſeparably connected with the idolatrous worſhip of the times. The New Teſtament here alſo extends and exalts virtue. No man, according

to its laws, ſhall be deſpiſed on account of his religious opinions, be they ever ſo abſurd and injurious; ſtill leſs ſhall he be ſtigmatiſed by mortifying and calumniating appellations; and leaſt of all condemned and pronounced incapable of the favour and bliſs of God. It commands, further, that Chriſtianity ſhall not be preſſed on any heretic, and leaſt of all through corporeal means. That thoſe appointed for that purpoſe ſhall explain the Chriſtian religion to him with ſound arguments and mildneſs; but leave the choice entirely to his own judgement. That above all, the Chriſtian ſhall deſire and hope for the ſalvation of every man whoſe religious ſentiments are erroneous, even though he be a contemner of religion or an atheiſt; love him as cordially as he would a believing brother; act with benevolence and beneficence towards him; and pray to God for his happineſs.

pineſs[y]. That, in this manner, the Chriſtian ſhall on the one ſide avoid and flee from every error; abominate in particular thoſe which are pernicious to the general welfare, conſequently moſt of all errors in religious concerns: and labour on the contrary with all earneſtneſs and zeal after truth, particularly in religion, the higheſt concern of man. On the other ſide, he ſhall be attached with brotherly love to him who errs, is deceived, or led into ſin; recommend to him at proper opportunities the truth with firmneſs and fervency; endeavour to win him by every action of kindneſs and beneficence: but give up to his own judgement the perfect liberty of choice. Such a tolerance, abſolutely unlimited, and purified from all indifference towards the truth, is taught, and indeed was firſt taught by Chriſtianity!—In-

[y] Matth. x. 13. John vi. 66—68. Rom. xiv. 2 Cor. i. 24. iv. 2, 3, and other places.

tolerance on the other hand is, according to its principles, not only—to afflict men with civil puniſhments on account of mere matters of religion; to compel them to renounce their religion; or to put them to death for the ſake of it: but alſo, to refuſe reſidence in a country, together with the free exerciſe of their religion to religious ſocieties, whoſe tenets are not pernicious to any principles of civil right; and, in ſhort, to withhold from any one, ſimply on account of his articles of faith, thoſe charitable ſervices which are in our power.—And this intolerance, according to its doctrine, is ſin[z]; a renunciation and diſhonouring of Chriſtianity and its fundamental principles[a]; is the deſtruction of one of its eſſential laws, the love of our brethren[b]; and even a crime againſt

[z] Rom. xiv. 23.
[a] Luke ix. 52—56.
[b] 1 Tim. vi. 1—6.

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the injured majeſty of God[c]. When, therefore, as early as the fourth century[d], men, who bore the name of Chriſtians, began to perſecute thoſe who differed in religious opinions from themſelves, and to conſider and to puniſh what they called hereſy as a civil crime; when Auguſtine placed this religious perſecution among the Chriſtian doctrines; when men, in the eighth century, began to propagate the Chriſtian religion (as they erroneouſly named it) with fire and ſword; when ſhortly afterwards the term *Heretic* became a magic word which transformed thouſands of men into tigers; when we read of the chriſtian cruſades againſt heretics and unbelievers; and when, laſtly, the inquiſition became eſtabliſhed in the very boſom of Chriſtendom, that moſt terrible of all tribunals, which nevertheleſs was named

[c] Rom. xiv. 1—13. [d] See above, p. 90.

the holy, and in the name of Chriſt and of God murdered, burnt, deſolated—

Triſtius haud illa monſtrum, nec ſævior ulla
Peſtis et ira Deûm ſtygiis ſeſe extulit undis:—

Who can lay theſe abuſes or even the leaſt part of them to the charge of Chriſtianity? Sooner might we reject all the arts of medicine, becauſe ignorant pretenders to ſkill in that ſcience have robbed men of their health and lives; ſooner condemn all civil ſociety, becauſe tyranny, riot and anarchy have often ariſen out of it; ſooner call reaſon, that preeminent quality of man, the peſt of humanity, becauſe the Alexanders, Cæſars, Neros, and Buonapartes uſe it for the devaſtation of the earth—than call Chriſtianity intolerant on account of the abominations of ſuch diſgraces to humanity, who apply to themſelves its name! Chriſtianity which firſt introduced among men a tolerance as unlimited as enlightened and charitable!

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Parallel between the Propagation of Chriſtianity, and of the Religion of Mahomet.

THUS Chriſtianity eſtabliſhed itſelf in the world, never perſecuting, but inceſſantly perſecuted; under various difficulties from within; and infinite oppoſitions, perſecutions, and cruelties from without; entirely *through itſelf*, through its own doctrines and laws; and ſpread itſelf over every part of the globe!—It is true, the religion of Mahomet likewiſe extended itſelf with moſt aſtoniſhing rapidity and facility over the face of the earth. Scarcely had ten years elapſed ſince his flight from Mecca, (the Hejra) when he had brought all the tribes of the Arabians under the yoke of his religion and ſovereignty; and a ſhort time afterwards his

his religion had ſwallowed up the numerous and flouriſhing churches in the Eaſt; overflowed the Weſt; and was become the terror of united Chriſtendom. This event is truly aſtoniſhing; and the enemies of Chriſtianity have not failed to make uſe of it as an argument to ſhew that there was nothing miraculous in the extenſion of the religion of Jeſus[e]. But in this they have either not known, or have anxiouſly ſuppreſſed, the connections and means of aſſiſtance which favoured Mahomet, and which leave nothing wonderful in the ſucceſs of his doctrine.—Mahomet came into the world exactly at the time proper for his purpoſes. *Religion* in Arabia Felix, the paternal country of his new ſyſtem, was then in the moſt deplorable ſtate.

[e] Boulainvilliers, Vie de Mahomed, avec des reflexions ſur la religion Mahomedane, et les coutumes des Muſulmans. Amſterdam, 2d edit. 1731, in 8vo, p. 442.

The

The inhabitants of the country were divided into four religious parties. Some of them were devoted to the idolatrous worſhip of the Sabians, who adored the ſtars as divinities: and others to Zendiciſm, or the idolatry of the Magi, who worſhipped fire. The Jewiſh religion had a great many followers, who treated the others with much cruelty. And the Chriſtians who were reſident there at that time, formed principally an aſſemblage of different heretical ſects, who had taken refuge among this free people, becauſe they were not tolerated in the Roman empire. Under ſuch a diſtracted ſtate of religion, it would have been highly wonderful if Mahomet had not procured in a ſhort time a numerous train of followers. The Chriſtian religion, on the contrary, received its origin in a country where the only true God was worſhipped, and the Moſaic law (which it abrogated) univerſally revered.—The

political

political ſtate of the world at the period when Mahomet appeared was uncommonly favourable to a new conqueror. The Weſtern part of Roman empire was then overflowed by the Goths; and the Eaſtern ſo weakened through the Huns and Perſians, that it could reſiſt no vigorous attack; without taking into conſideration the abſurd ſuperſtition, the horrid conteſts, and blood-thirſty ſpirit of perſecution which had then almoſt entirely extinguiſhed Chriſtianity. In the Perſian empire exiſted ruinous internal commotions which were excited principally through the impious doctrine of Manes, and the defolating principles of Mazdack, who, a ſhort time before the appearance of Mahomet, had given himſelf out for a prophet, and introduced a community of wives and of property. But at the time of the Apoſtles the power of the Romans was ſtill in its meridian height, and had

united

united almoſt the whole globe under its ſovereignty.

Again, Arabia was very *populous*; many Jews and Chriſtians had taken refuge there from other kingdoms where they had been perſecuted by the prevailing ſects. The Arabians were a free people; not devoted like other nations to the extravagances of luſtful pleaſures, but temperate and hardy, and therefore properly qualified for new conqueſts. This brave people was at that time divided into ſeparate tribes, who were all independent, and connected with one another in no political union: a circumſtance which uncommonly facilitated the conqueſts of Mahomet. Mahomet himſelf was deſcended from a family of much power and conſequence; and by a marriage with an opulent widow became one of the richeſt men in Mecca. He was endowed with fine and politic talents; and from the various journies which he

he made in his mercantile concerns, had acquired a perfect acquaintance with the conſtitution of the country.—He *compounded* his new religious ſyſtem out of all the four prevailing religions of Arabia. From the idolatry of the Sabians and Magi he took the divine celebration of Friday, and of the four months in the year; the pilgrimage to Mecca, together with different ſuperſtitious fables concerning the reſurrection of the dead and the laſt judgment. From the Jews he borrowed many tales, particularly concerning angels; numerous purifications and faſts; the prohibition of certain kinds of food and of uſury; the permiſſion of polygamy and of capricious divorce. From the Chriſtian ſects he derived a variety of doctrinal tenets as well falſe as true, concerning the divine decrees; the authority of Jeſus and of the Evangeliſts; the reſurrection of the body; the univerſal judgment

of

of men; together with many moral precepts. Thus he united by this mixture all the four religions of his paternal country; and thereby procured a more eaſy admittance for his new doctrine.—Further, he eſtabliſhed his religion in ſuch a manner that it did *not excite againſt itſelf the paſſions of men*, but on the contrary *flattered them in various ways*. According to his ſyſtem the ſum of religion conſiſted in the performance of certain corporeal ceremonies—purifications, the recital of certain prayers, alms, faſts, and pilgrimages to Mecca. It was truly much eaſier to perform theſe than to reſtrain luſts, to ſuppreſs all ſinful appetites, and to confine thoſe which are innocent within their proper bounds. He attributed ſuch a value to theſe mechanical ceremonies, that he ſuppoſed atonement to be thereby made for every crime and every ſin. Such a doctrine, ſo ex-

tremely accommodating to the ſinful paſſions of every kind; together with the permiſſion of polygamy and capricious divorce; and the promiſe of a full enjoyment of groſs, ſenſual luxuries in a future life, brought more men under his ſubjection than could have been effected by a moderate army.—And laſtly, Mahomet was not ſo much a *Prophet* as a *Soldier*. He endeavoured to propagate his religion not through arguments, he did not addreſs it to the underſtanding; but he appealed to arms, and made it a fundamental law of his religion[f] to wage inceſſant war againſt unbelievers; and, ſhould they refuſe either to become Mahometans, or to purchaſe a freedom of religion from the hands of the faithful, by the payment of a certain tribute, to decide the matter with the ſword.

[f] See the Coran, ch. ix.

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Under ſuch circumſtances it would have been a phenomenon moſt wonderful and at variance with the whole analogy of hiſtory, if the doctrine of the prophet of Arabia had experienced an unhappy, or even a leſs fortunate, fate.—But that an hiſtory, and a religion founded thereon,—which was diametrically oppoſed to all the modes of divine ſervice that exiſted at the time of its origin; and could be eſtabliſhed on nothing elſe but on their ruins—which demanded from its followers under the puniſhment of eternal miſery, a perfect change in the whole train of their thoughts; a deteſtation of all unchaſte pleaſures, fornication, adultery, polygamy, wanton and diſſolute divorce; the abſolute avoidance of all ambitious, covetous and avaritious projects and concerns; and which placed the eſſence of the true worſhip of God not in viſible ceremonies, but in a pure, humble, philanthropic, and truly

virtuous mind:—that a religion, which was ſupported by no powerful men; but was preached by thirteen poor, deſpiſed and illiterate perſons; that this religion; without any the leaſt poſſible aſſiſtance of worldly power; without any active compulſion[g]; but, on the contrary, under the greateſt oppreſſion, afflictions and torments of its ſupporters; ſhould have prevailed over the whole nation of the Jews and the united power of the Romans; ſhould have acquired in a few years many thouſand followers; ſoon afterwards ſpread itſelf into the fartheſt parts of the North and Weſt; and laſtly ſhould have ſubjected even kings and emperours, together with the greateſt and moſt civilized nations; *this* is an event which has not its parallel in all hiſtory; and can by no means be explained, without calling to our aid a

[g] I ſpeak here of its firſt propagation.

moſt

moſt extraordinary ſupport of the Almighty.

After what has been ſaid, it is almoſt incomprehenſible how Lord Bolingbroke could object againſt the Chriſtian religion, that it had produced no effects worthy of a divine origin. What kind of effects is then demanded? 'If the revelations (ſays Bolingbroke[h]) which have been pretended, had not been pretended only—the neceſſary conſequence would have been, that the ſyſtem of religion and government would have been uniform through the whole world.' And why? 'Becauſe the *divine Omnipotence*[i] would have *impoſed it on all mankind,* ſo as neceſſarily to *engage their aſſent.*' But God never acts in this manner in the government of the world as far as we are acquainted with it. He has given us, as Bolingbroke confeſſes, a natural revelation of

[h] Works, vol. iv. p. 224.
[i] Works, vol. v. p. 261—267.

his will; since He has connected with certain modes of conduct either salutary or pernicious consequences, and bestowed Reason on man to enable him to discover them. And yet it is evident, that He does not compel men to comply with this revelation.—Religion cannot operate like a charm or a medicine; we may study and practice it, or not. Agreeably to the moral nature of man, it produces no effects otherwise than through the understanding. And admitting that God had intended to compel men by his Omnipotence to the practice of a certain religion; of what use then would have been an immediate written revelation? Either, therefore, there is no immediate written revelation of God; or the very existence of such a revelation proves, that it is God's will to deal with us, not according to his *Omnipotence*, but in a *moral manner*, and to leave it entirely to our free-will, whether

ther we will follow what He has clearly revealed or not.

Indeed the opponents of Chriſtianity labour to deſtroy the miracle of its propagation, by producing a variety of *natural cauſes*, through which they endeavour to explain it. But the greater part of theſe pretended cauſes are forged; and even if we unite them all together, this event remains incomprehenſible, unleſs we take into the account a higher ſupport. 1ſt. What they ſay, in the firſt place, of Fanaticiſm, is amply refuted in page 280 f. —2d. The pretext of univerſal Tolerance under the Jews and Romans is evidently contradictory to hiſtory[k].—2d. And the ſame may be ſaid in anſwer to the aſſertion, that the firſt ſupporters of the chriſtian religion were exclusively ſimple and mean people[l].—Bolingbroke has choſen ſtill another

[k] See above, p. 363. [l] See above, p. 342.

mode. He ſuppoſes this to have been the cauſe of its rapid and extenſive progreſs, that the Apoſtles uſed the artifice of receiving into the pale of Chriſtianity all, without exception, both Jews and Gentiles[m]. But what aſſiſtance could that give to a religion, which afforded not the leaſt temporal advantage, but, on the contrary, placed its firſt ſupporters in danger of loſing every thing they poſſeſſed in this world, nay even life itſelf? Suppoſe a poor, deſpiſed man, who could ſcarcely find ſupport for himſelf, were to publiſh a declaration, that he would receive every one without diſtinction into his ſervice; is it probable that a ſingle perſon would be induced to enter into it?—Another aſſertion, that a community of property was introduced in the earlieſt ages of the church, is ſtated as a moſt powerful cauſe of the propa-

[m] Works, vol. iv. p. 306.

gation

gation of Chriſtianity[n]. Should we grant, as his Lordſhip pretends without any foundation and in oppoſition to hiſtory, that ſuch a common ſtock exiſted in the primitive church; this very circumſtance would have rather hindered the rich and powerful from embracing the religion. But the aſſertion is evidently falſe. Such a community of property exiſted only in the beginning, and indeed only in the parent-community at Jeruſalem[o]. The converts from Paganiſm, who compoſed the far greateſt part, were reſtrained from leaving their former condition and calling[p]; that through their diligence they might obtain ſupport for themſelves, and a trifle for the aſſiſtance of the neceſſitous[q]; but were by no means allowed to afford nouriſhment

[n] Works, vol. iv. p. 422.
[o] Acts v. vi.
[p] 1 Cor. vii. 17—34. 30, 31. Tit. ii. 9, 10.
[q] Epheſ. iv. 28.

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to the indolent[a]. And the Apoſtles themſelves followed this precept; they never once permitted the communities to maintain them, but themſelves procured their own ſupport[b].

Once more:—When we thus obſerve Chriſtianity ariſing in the world, continuing and extending itſelf during eighteen hundred years, continually wider and wider; when we ſee that neither the idolatry, ſuperſtition, and infidelity which ſurrounded it on all ſides; nor the united power of the world, which ſought to extirpate it; nor the heretics, who deformed it; nor the wretches, who betrayed it; nor even its unworthy followers, who, particularly ſince the fourth century, ſcandalized it by their vices; nor, laſtly, time, the great deſtroyer of all human things, have ever been in a condition, I will not ſay to annihilate, but even to alter it; we cannot but recognize the

[a] 2 Theſſ. iii. 6—12. [b] 2 Theſſ. iii. 7—9.

traces

traces of a Superior Providence; we cannot but acknowledge that the *inexplicable* propagation of Chriſtianity is a ſeal of the truth of the hiſtory of the New Teſtament, and, I dare pronounce, of the divine origin of its religion!

A ſummary Recapitulation, and Concluſion, of the Credibility of the New Teſtament.

THUS by the calm and temperate language in which the writers of the New Teſtament relate their hiſtory, we become prejudiced in their favour. They do not declaim on Jeſus, they deliver over him no panegyrics; but they let him act and ſpeak. And they inform us of his actions, particularly his miracles, in the moſt ſimple manner, without any laboured ornaments,

without any rhetorical amplification, and without any enthuſiaſtic eulogies; nay, without even any calm explication of what is great and ſupernatural therein. They are related with a ſtriking ſimplicity, exactly like the moſt general and common-place circumſtances.

Theſe authors, as we have ſeen above, had every neceſſary qualification in order to know with certainty the truth of what they relate. We cannot diſcover in them a ſingle ſpark of Fanaticiſm. It is impoſſible that they could have been deceived in that of which they inform us; and ſtill leſs were they deceivers: they who publiſhed their hiſtory on the ſpot and at the time, where and when it happened; whoſe narration is in part remarkably confirmed by foreign authors; whoſe writings contain in themſelves ſo many clear traces of truth; who oppoſe every kind of deceit in their doctrines

and actions; who from their preaching had no temporal advantages to obtain, but probably all to loſe; who, laſtly, even ſacrificed to their doctrine, reſt, civil honour, and life. The character of theſe men is evidently the moſt noble and moſt amiable: open-hearted and honeſt in their inſtructions; mild and tolerant towards thoſe who thought differently from themſelves; ſerene and ſocial in common intercourſe; affectionate towards their friends; generous towards their enemies—they undertake a life compoſed of pure fatigue and difficulties, and ſuffer contempt and torment, in order to promulgate a hiſtory and religion built thereon, which they conſidered as the greateſt bleſſing of the world. And their preaching is attended with the moſt wonderful effect. They are therefore not only credible; but—they are ſo in a greater degree than a Tacitus; they are credible

dible evidences in the higheſt of all poſſible degrees. So that either there is abſolutely no immediate revelation from God, or it is contained in the writings of the New Teſtament.

THE END.

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